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[For additional information on the author's theoretical orientation, see Category 12.]

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[For additional information on linguistic theory, see Category 12.]

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# *Introduction to the Brown Thrasher Edition*

### CHARLES JOYNER

•121 LOOK AT THE PICTURES. HERE ARE CABINS AND PRAISE-houses, oxcarts, banjos, and coiled baskets. Here are carved chains and masks, wooden figures and walking sticks. Here are the haunting faces of black coastal Georgians.

121 115 Here is Katie Brown, sitting on the sunny steps of her unpainted cabin, her head swathed in a white kerchief, her body encased in a well-worn sweater. Her visitors have come down the coast more than fifty miles from Savannah, crossing over to Sapelo, one of the long chain of sea islands that stretch along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Passing the sawmill village in the center of the island, they have bounced through woods and underbrush over winding, tree-shaded oxcart paths to the tiny settlement on the lower end of the island. Here live the descendants of Sapelo's plantation slaves. Katie Brown is a gracious hostess to the visitors who ply her with pipe tobacco and questions about old-time customs and beliefs. They ask her about "sitting-up" with the dead, about conjures and spirits, about the use of drums in church services, and about animal trickster tales. "Yeah, we hab set-ups wid duh dead," she acknowledges, but maintains, "I ain know bout conjuh." As for drums in church, she recalls that they "use to hab um long time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um." Regarding Buh Rabbit stories, she says, "I heah um, but I fuhgits." But she has not forgotten Belali Mohomet, her great-grandfather who came from

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Africa and became the driver on Thomas Spalding's Sapelo plantation. Belali Mohomet and his wife, Phoebe, prayed "wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set," she recalls. "Dey bow tuh duh sun and hab lill mat tuh kneel on." She also tells the visitors the story of her grandmother. "Belali he from Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds we didn know." On the same day, every year, her grandmother had made a strange, flat cake.

> She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tek dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. "Saraka" she call um.

Katie Brown has endured. She is one of the oldest dwellers on Sapelo. Her words gradually reveal to the visitors a portrait of Sapelo's black community, a culture in which the past still persists into the present, a culture shaped as much by remembered traditions from Africa as by encountered traditions from elsewhere.

Look at the pictures. Here is Tony William Delegal, the blind Ogeechee Town centenarian who toiled as a slave on Major John Thomas's Harris Neck plantation and who can still sing an African song for the Savannah visitors. Here is Henry Williams of St. Marys, born a slave of "William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation." Williams recalls Daddy Patty, an Ibo who "use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he came from. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im." Patty had told the men of life in Africa. "Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz." And here is Jim Myers of Mush Bluff Island, sitting on the oak logs that serve as front steps for his cabin in a hard-

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● 121 packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly
115 stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around
his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-
(757) born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big
boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big
dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke"
(567) newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house,
chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk
speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names
and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu-
(192) merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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•(2| Projects Administration, the Federal Writers' Project employed over six thousand jobless persons, some of whom were experienced in putting words on paper—novelists, poets, Ph.D.'s, journalists, and free-lance writers. They interviewed sharecroppers and living exslaves; they transcribed court records and inventoried cemeteries; they collected oral history and folklore. Through their state guides and other publications they contributed materially to a better understanding of America. Jerrold Hirsch writes that the national director, Henry G. Alsberg, and the folklore editor, Benjamin A. Botkin, shared a vision that attempted to reconcile cosmopolitan and provincialism. They respected the provincial sense of place and understood that every place possesses its own unique qualities and heritage, but they did not believe a sense of place was incompatible with a more cosmopolitan perspective informed by knowledge of other traditions. They saw American culture as pluralistic, a mosaic of different traditions, each contributing to the whole. But they found it difficult to communicate such a vision to state and local units. There are advantages to both provincial and cosmopolitan perspectives—that of the insider and that of the outsider—but rarely did any one person possess both. According to Hirsch, southern fieldworkers were closer to their folk roots and were more sensitive to local folklore than those outside the region and largely avoided the condescending tone that distanced the collector from the folk. When white southern fieldworkers reported black folklore and folkways, however, they could be as patronizing as their counterparts in other states. The national office worried that their encouragement of local folklore might contribute to a divisive regionalism. Botkin, hoping to emphasize the process of cultural interchange, wished a line "to be clearly drawn between the acculturative and contra-acculturative phases of regionalism." The Savannah Unit's concentration on African survivals rather than on black acculturation in Georgia found itself in conflict with the vision of the national office, which felt that *Drums and Shadows* promoted a racist theory of cultural evolution in which cultural traits might "survive" from earlier, more "primitive" stages of culture but would eventually disappear under contact with more "advanced" cultures.[1]

*Drums and Shadows* was also in conflict with popular stereotypes. Published in 1940, it was offered to an American public whose image of black Georgians was formed by *Gone with the Wind*. Margaret Mitchell's novel had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1936, and David O. Selznick's film version had enjoyed enormous popular and critical success in 1939, setting box-office records and sweeping the Academy Awards. Black Georgians, as portrayed in *Gone with the Wind*, were either loyal, unsupervised field hands like Big Sam—so grateful to be allowed to be "de one dat sez when it's quittin' time at Tara" that he is later proud to dig trenches to help the Confederates win the war—or loyal, unhurried house servants like Prissy (who "don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' babies"), or the butler Uncle Peter (whose incongruous dignity is presented as faintly comical), or the bossy, influential Mammy (the Emily Post of Tara, arbiter of what is appropriate and what "ain't fittin'"). Unlike David Wark Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, the images are sentimental rather than paranoid, patronizing rather than vicious; but they are nonetheless inaccurate and demeaning.[2]

Seduced by such affectionate and appealing stereotypes, Americans were ill prepared for the real black Georgians presented in *Drums and Shadows*. It presented a world far removed from the traditional South of sentimental romances in which Colonel Massa sips mint juleps on the magnolia-shaded piazza of the white-columned Big House, while happy, carefree slaves prance about, rolling their eyes and strumming their banjos. The real world of rural black Southerners in the 1930s was one in which families lived on less than two hundred dollars a year in leaky, tin-roofed houses lacking either glass or screens in the windows. It was a world

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•121 in which children walked miles to rickety schools and the elderly walked miles to rickety churches. It was a world in which farmers borrowed small sums at indefinite rates of interest and lost their lands at indefinite rates of foreclosure. The major impact of the Great Depression on this world of perpetual depression was to bring in fieldworkers from the Federal Writers' Project.[3]

114 *Drums and Shadows* was sparsely reviewed at the time and did not enjoy large sales. The *New York Times Book Review* buried its notice on page 17, and the critic damned the book with faint praise. In a joint review of *Drums and Shadows* and Mason Crum's *Gullah*, C. McD. Puckette said that both books performed "a real service to folklore." He lamented that the "generation of Negroes raised under the tutelage of former slaves is thinning and sophistication is coming even to the last point of the outermost barrier island." And he praised the interviewers who "convince one that a faithful task has been done and Georgia can justly be gratified at this addition to the annals of the State." By comparison with Crum's book, he said that *Drums and Shadows* "covers the fresher ground only because fewer chronicles have recorded the stories of Sapelo, St. Simon's and St. Mary's."[4]

121 114 THE IMPORTANCE OF *Drums and Shadows* is much clearer in retrospect. It was the pioneering book in demonstrating the continuing, living influence of African folklore among Afro-Americans, not through bits and pieces of shadowy survivals gathered in small numbers over scattered wide areas, but through concrete examples gathered in massive quantities within a small area of the United States. In his foreword the sociologist Guy B. Johnson termed it "probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time."[5] The Savannah Unit was aware that the local folklore collected on the Georgia coast had implications extending far beyond the state of Georgia. The writers pre-

sented their material in the explicit hope that it might be "useful as an outline for further investigations in this and related fields."[6]

In choosing to focus on African survivals, *Drums and Shadows* was consciously departing from a generation of scholarly consensus in the fields of history, folklore, sociology, and anthropology. The leading university historian of the Afro-American experience in slavery was Yale's Georgia-born scholar Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. His *American Negro Slavery*, published in 1918, remained the standard work on the subject until the 1950s.[7] Studies of Georgia slavery by Ralph Betts Flanders and Albert H. Stoddard were written in the Phillips tradition.[8] In *American Negro Slavery*, Phillips revealed a certain ambivalence regarding the amount of African inheritance by Afro-Americans. Occasionally he seemed to believe in African cultural continuity among the slaves. "While produced only in America," he wrote, "the plantation slave was a product of old world forces. His nature was an African's profoundly modified but hardly transformed by the requirements of European civilization. The wrench from Africa and the subjection to the new discipline while uprooting his ancient language and customs had little more effect upon his temperament than upon his complexion." Yet only a few sentences later Phillips quoted with approval a saying of the slaveholders that "a negro was what a white man made him." On the slave plantation, the slave left Africa behind. "Ceasing to be Foulah, Coramantee, Ebo or Angola, he became instead the American negro."[9] In any event, Phillips's view of Africa was terribly negative. "No people is without its philosophy and religion," he admitted, but "of all regions of extensive habitation equatorial Africa is the worst." As for the Africans, "the climate in fact not only discourages but prohibits mental effort of severe or sustained character, and the negroes have submitted to that prohibition as to many others, through countless generations, with excellent grace." Such

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•121| African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages."[10]

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea is-
12 lands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with
177 whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well."
Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English gram-
(193) mar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the
particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

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12 ary tradition in anthropology that considered blacks to be at an earlier, less advanced level of civilization than whites—denied any enduring influence of African culture. According to Boas,

> The traits of the American Negroes are adequately explained on the basis of his [*sic*] history and social status. The tearing away from the African soil and the consequent complete loss of the old standards of life, which were replaced by the dependency of slavery and by all that it entailed, followed by a period of disorganization and by a severe economic struggle against heavy odds, are sufficient to explain the inferiority of the status of the race, without falling back upon the theory of hereditary inferiority.

121 Another Boas student, Ruth Benedict, wrote of black Americans in her book *Race:* "Their patterns of political, economic, and artistic behavior were forgotten—even the languages they had spoken in Africa." She accounted for this loss in the same way that E. Franklin Frazier and Guy B. Johnson had: "Conditions of slavery in America were so drastic that this loss is not to be wondered at."[18]

By the 1930s one anthropologist was beginning to ask if scholars might not, upon close examination of Afro-American culture, find "that there are some subtle elements left of what was ancestrally possessed." Himself a student of Boas, Melville J. Herskovits had early in his career scorned the idea that there were even lingering traces of Africa among black Americans and had doubted that there was any separate Afro-American culture. "That they have absorbed the culture of America," he wrote in 1925, "is too obvious, almost, to be mentioned." As he began to conduct comparative research in New World Afro-American cultures, he began to question his earlier position. As late as 1937, however, when

•121 he published his *Life in a Haitian Valley*, he declared that "going native" (being a participant-observer) was "neither possible nor of benefit among West African Negroes and their New World descendants." His stated reason was that the failure of the fieldworker to observe the racial etiquette of segregation would embarrass informants and subject the fieldworker to community ridicule.

Herskovits published his most significant work, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, in 1941, following several years of fieldwork in the Caribbean, in Brazil, and in West Africa. In it Herskovits proposed a general theory of culture change that posited the persistence of such African survivals in Afro-American cultures as *Drums and Shadows* had already demonstrated. *The Myth of the Negro Past* was immediately controversial. Nearly all American intellectuals, black and white, denounced his thesis as misguided and exaggerated. Racial integrationists such as E. Franklin Frazier and Guy B. Johnson were concerned that segregationists might use Herskovits's arguments to build a case that black Americans were unassimilable. Herskovits, a long-time foe of white supremacy, was no supporter of segregation (even though much of his *Myth of the Negro Past* was built upon the scholarship of Ulrich B. Phillips, whom he quoted approvingly a dozen times). But few Americans other than ardent white supremacists were prepared to accept his thesis of African survivals in the New World.

Drums and Shadows preceded *The Myth of the Negro Past* by a year. In some ways, as in its fascination with primitivism and its sometimes patronizing tone, *Drums and Shadows* reflects the time and place of its inception. What is remarkable about *Drums and Shadows*, however, is not the occasional minor lapse but the determined and generally successful effort the whole project made to overcome such attitudes.

How did *Drums and Shadows* come to focus on African survivals among coastal black Georgians, then, since most schol-

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121 ars of black America emphasized the loss of African culture? Melville J. Herskovits was an advisor to the project. One might suspect that he imposed the theme on the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers' Project. On the other hand, Guy B. Johnson was another major advisor. Was Johnson, identified with the white-to-black school of acculturation, outmaneuvered for influence by Herskovits? Was that why he was rewarded with the consolation of writing the foreword?

In fact, Mary Granger, district supervisor of the Savannah Unit, seems to have originated the survivals emphasis and to have chosen the project's advisors because of that emphasis. Granger—a woman of formidable intellect—was a cosmopolitan and well-traveled novelist. Her choice of Herskovits as advisor was an obvious one. Less obvious was her choice of Johnson. Johnson, however, maintains that he was never as hostile to the notion of African survivals as he has been depicted. He never denied the existence of African survivals nor opposed their study, although he believed that they played a less significant role in Afro-American culture than European elements did. He describes his position, then and now, as a middle position between the Africanist and Europeanist extremes. He believed, and still believes, that the balance lies somewhat closer to the Europeanist position. Johnson encouraged the Savannah project's search for survivals, and it was he who suggested the inclusion of an appendix documenting African parallels for the Georgia material. Furthermore, Johnson and Herskovits were social friends and visited Georgia together.[18]

*Drums and Shadows* certainly reflects the influence of Herskovits's earlier work in Dutch Guiana, Haiti, and West Africa rather more than it does Johnson's earlier sea island investigation. Not only are *Rebel Destiny*, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, and *Dahomey* listed in the bibliography—along with Johnson's *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*—but they are cited time and again in the annotations of black folklore from coastal Georgia.

121 114 Herskovits and Johnson were not the only advisors chosen by the *Drums and Shadows* team. Among other outside consultants were the anthropologist William R. Bascom, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson, the folklorist Newbell Niles Puckett, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner, and the poet Sterling Brown. Three of the consultants—Johnson, Turner, and Brown—were black. Brown was perhaps the most influential upon the Savannah Unit. In his poetry he had already moved away from the pseudo-folk persona of the minstrel-show tradition to an authentic black folk voice. Perhaps the more literary orientation of the Savannah Unit gave Brown greater influence upon them than the social scientists could exert. The Georgia fieldworkers would have been familiar with a tradition in Afro-American literature that extolled—however equivocally—the African inheritance. Alain Locke had spoken ambivalently in 1925 of black Americans as "the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization." In the same year Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage" proposed that a black God would better understand the Afro-American's roots in Africa and anomalous position in America. Even earlier, in 1921, Langston Hughes had published a Whitmanesque identification with his African ancestors:

> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

(126) Muriel and Malcolm Bell, photographers for *Drums and Shadows*, were inspired by their literary reference point to see Robert Lucas, whom they photographed at St. Marys, in the context of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. And they saw Katie Brown in the context of William Faulkner's Dilsey.[illegible]

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121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture."[1]

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials
were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many
pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through un-
derbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The
Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from
more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's
121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of reten-
tion, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows*
128 eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and
documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European
parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal
(197) blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole lan-
guage that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If
(126) the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

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121 mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accu-
128 rately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of
(126) the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the
(197) pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits.[14]

128 (126) LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

121 Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their
128 surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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1. Jerrold Hirsch, "Portrait of America: The Federal Writers' Project in a Cultural and Intellectual Context" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1984), pp. 30–66, 351–81, 389–90. Botkin's quote is on p. 40.

2. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York, 1936); Jack Temple Kirby, *Media-made Dixie: The South in the American Imagination* (Baton Rouge, La., 1978), pp. 73–74, 169; Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., *The Celluloid South: Hollywood and the Southern Myth* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1981), pp. 3–4, 17–19, 128–29, 133–34; Rudy Behlmer, ed., *Memo from David O. Selznick* (New York, 1972), p. 151; Gavin Lambert, *GWTW: The Making of Gone with the Wind* (Boston, 1973), p. 70.

3. Cf. Clarence Cason, *90° in the Shade* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935); Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago, 1941); John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York, 1937); Charles S. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago, 1934); Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom* (New York, 1939); and Arthur F. Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1936).

4. C. McD. Puckette, "Sea Island Negroes," *New York Times Book Review*, April 6, 1941, p. 17. See also Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham, N.C., 1940).

5. Guy B. Johnson, Foreword to 1940 edition of *Drums and Shadows*, p. vi.

6. *Drums and Shadows*, original dust jacket.

7. Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1918). For explications of Phillips's life and works see Eugene D. Genovese, "Ulrich Bonnell Phillips and His Critics," Foreword to *American Negro Slavery* by Phillips (Baton Rouge, La., 1966); Eugene D. Genovese, "Race and Class in Southern History: An Appraisal of the Work of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips," *Agricultural History* 41 (1967): 345–58; John Herbert Roper, *U. B. Phillips: A Southern Mind* (Macon, Ga., 1984); Merton L. Dillon, *Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Historian of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, La., 1985); and John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865–1918* (Westport, Conn., 1985).

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Music," *International Review of Missions* 15 (1926): 748–51; Newman Ivey White, *American Negro Folk Songs* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928); George Pullen Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals* (New York, 1943). For studies of the controversy over the spirituals, see Charles Joyner, "Music: Origins of Spirituals," in *Encyclopedia of Black America*, ed. W. Augustus Low and Virgil A. Clift (New York, 1981), pp. 591–96; John David Smith, "The Unveiling of Slave Folk Culture, 1865–1920," *Journal of Folklore Research* 21 (1984): 47–62; D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1959), pp. 345–64.

15. See the following by Elsie Clews Parsons: *Folk Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923); *Folk Tales of the Andros Islands* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918); *Folklore from the Cape Verde Islands* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923); *Folk Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, vols. 1–3 (Cambridge, Mass., 1933–35, 1943). See also Newbell Niles Puckett, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1926), pp. i–ii; Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Philadelphia, 1935).

16. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York, 1938, 1963), p. 240; Ruth Benedict, *Race: Science and Politics* (New York, 1940, 1959), pp. 86–87.

17. Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro in the New World: The Statement of a Problem," *American Anthropologist* 32 (1930): 141–55; Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro's Americanism," in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Locke (New York, 1925), pp. 359–60; Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), pp. 326–27.

18. Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York, 1941; Boston, 1958), pp. 8, 25, 37, 40, 41, 45, 88, 118, 120n, 126, 127, 304. See Guy B. Johnson's review in *American Sociological Review* 7 (1942): 289. Cf. John F. Szwed, "An American Anthropological Dilemma: The Politics of Afro-American Culture," in *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes (New York, 1972), pp. 153–81.

19. Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr., interview with author, Savannah, Ga., September 22–23, 1985; Guy B. Johnson, Chapel Hill, N.C., telephone conversation with author, September 14, 1985.

20. *Drums and Shadows*, p. ix; Locke, *The New Negro*, pp. 14–15; Countee Cullen, "Heritage," in *On These I Stand* (New York, 1947);

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Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," *The Crisis*, June 1921; Bell interview.

21. Hirsch, "Portrait of America," pp. 40, 301, 388.

22. For an analysis of the structure of the creole language, Gullah, and a history of how it came into being, see Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana, Ill., 1984), pp. 196–224.

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## Photographers' Note

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LANDSCAPES AND NATURAL HISTORY PROVIDED SUBJECT matter for our start into what we thought for a time would lead to careers in professional photography. The first serious project was a series of pictures of Savannah houses and buildings for a history of the city's architecture, a venture that was inadvertently put aside. We had our own darkroom, in which we did our developing and printing. We used a German-made Eastman Kodak, a 2¼ × 3¼–inch ground glass camera called a Recomar. A sturdy tripod and a large black cloth enabled us to stop the lens down to its limit of f/32 and to bring forth a sharp image on the inverted glass screen. The stationary subject permitted ample time to compose our picture; first one of us, then the other made the necessary adjustments from under the black cloth. It was always an interesting maneuver and one that stood us in good stead when we came to the *Drums and Shadows* project.

Mary Granger, our older and interesting family friend, was the unquestioned leader of the Savannah section of the "writers" who were trying to break the depression's grip through the Work Projects Administration of the federal government. It was as district supervisor of the Savannah unit of the Georgia Writers' Project that she told us of her proposed study of African cultural survivals she believed to be extant along the Georgia coast. We were interested and from the outset believed we could photograph coastal blacks using the same technique we had found successful on Savannah architecture. We had seen the Julia Peterkin–Doris Ulmann

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• 121 collaboration, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* and resolved that our photo-
graphs of the Negroes would be as sharply focused as had
126 been our Savannah houses. The soft focus of the Ulmann
portraits was not to our liking, nor was the poor quality of
their reproduction. Ulmann's remarkable ability to capture an
attitude and to reflect her subject's character we hoped to emu-
late. We soon learned that to photograph a person, particu-
larly a child, was far removed from making a portrait of an
eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building.

126 Our picture-taking expeditions were always led by Mary
Granger. If our subjects were to be close by Savannah she
would have made arrangements with friends or with members
of her staff who conducted earlier interviews. The usual pro-
cedure was for our leader to engage the subjects in conver-
sation at a spot we had chosen with an eye to light and
background. The camera on the tripod and the black cloth
126 that we were forever ducking under to focus and compose
123 invariably provoked their interest and usually put them at
ease. Mary Granger's confident and cheerful demeanor and
her good sense of humor accounted for the bright, responsive
expressions that show on the faces of many of the older
people. She questioned as she talked, made notes on inter-
esting responses, and often would chant the African song
"Kum Baba Yano," which she had learned from old Tony
Delegal. This never failed to bring a look of incredulity to the
faces of our subjects.

On the island trips and those to distant and remote areas our arrival was unannounced. Mary Granger was always ready to reward cooperative subjects or to persuade reluctant ones to be photographed with an offer of sweet rolls, tobacco, or old but serviceable clothes, all of which Miss Granger seemed to have in endless supply.

126 The *Drums and Shadows* photographs have appeared in
any number of publications, the artifacts and the Bowen
128 grave markers more frequently than the portraits. The latter,

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## *Foreword*

121 THE COASTAL REGION OF GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA is a fertile field for the study of old cultural heritages. Artists, poets, and novelists are not the only ones who have felt the allure of this region with its old plantations, its sleepy towns, its cypress swamps, its moss-hung trees, its ox carts, and its Negro peasantry. The works of C. C. Jones, Jr., John Bennett, Marcellus Whaley, Ambrose Gonzales, Reed Smith, Elsie C. Parsons, Ballanta-Taylor, T. J. Woofter, Jr., Guion G. Johnson, Guy B. Johnson, Robert Gordon, Lorenzo Turner, and others testify to the continuing interest of scholars in the history, folklore, folk music, and dialect of the Negro people of this region. These Negroes, more perhaps than any others in the United States, have lived in a physical and cultural isolation which is conducive to the survival of many old customs and thoughtways, both African and European. The present work represents an effort to go a bit deeper than any other work has done into certain aspects of the folk culture of these people in the coastal area. It is particularly welcome at this time, for it not only covers an area which has not received as much attention as have other areas, notably those around Charleston and Beaufort, but it is oriented toward the problem of African heritages in this country, a problem which is coming to be more and more important to the cultural anthropologist.

[171] Readers of *Drums and Shadows* will encounter much that is familiar, for many of the customs and beliefs found

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in
171 ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced
by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of
the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father
Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the
proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great
virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal
Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African
heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a
114 controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E.
Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the
177 matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of
178 *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward
the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that
African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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•121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial understanding
114 and the alleviation of friction between the races in
the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
177 these two, since I believe that there are a few important
178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree
of significance of these African heritages is questionable in view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the nature and importance of African heritages in our civilization, almost everyone would agree that the question is interesting and worthy of study. Such study may not only satisfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the scientific problem of the processes which go on when two
different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the
[128] material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no decision
as to the African sources of particular traits. She has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

Guy B. Johnson
University of North Carolina
1940

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## INTRODUCTION

175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs in-
178 tensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
(177) delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For
the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is
(124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews.
Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in
no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors,
visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform
754 mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many
(759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate
but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the
(777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of
Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad
mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of
ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are
influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as
his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor,
121 it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk
memories still live, without which this collection of source
material could not have been compiled.

**MARY GRANGER**, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

177 178 [458 There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression. "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh.*" The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

*When Roots Die* makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians, lawyers, legislators, judges, newcomers and visitors to the islands, and (one hopes) developers themselves—with a stimulating introduction to the language and culture of the Gullah-speaking people of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands. This book can help neighbors to understand one another better. It tells the truth about the people of the Sea Islands and their endangered traditions in a fresh and meaningful way.

—Charles Joyner

128 description of the geography, demography, and economic and social history of the region, because only in an environment like that of the Sea Islands could the inhabitants have maintained the level of continuity with African culture that has been recorded (and that surely remains to be recorded).

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the greatest portion of the book. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the settings in which the tales are told and the telling techniques employed, and sketches of some of the most prolific storytellers. Chapter 3 is composed of Gullah prayers and tales, with translations of some African counterparts. This section may be particularly pleasing to those interested in seeing just how closely the Gullah tales compare with African narratives.

Chapter 4 provides a description of those linguistic features in contemporary Gullah speech which have African parallels. This chapter may be especially useful in helping to delineate features characteristic of Gullah and not characteristic of inland African-American speech or of other speech varieties in the United States. In addition to providing insights into the status of present-day Gullah on the Sea Islands, Chapter 4 is germane to the interested reader's understanding of certain linguistic features of the Gullah speech samples.

● 121 Most often we get only a retrospective look at a culture after many of its unique features have been lost. One of the great attractions of the Sea Islands for students of the humanities and social sciences is that the expected slow pace of change in remote areas will permit a look into the culture as it undergoes transition. As outside forces erode the traditional social structure of the islanders, every attempt should be made to maintain a record of changing language, attitudes, and oral traditions. And as I hope to show in this book, researchers who come with the right preparation and receptive minds can make their studies as rewarding for the islanders as for the investigators.

121 114 In my own case, I decided that given the wide field of untapped resources in the Sea Island area, it would be wise to undertake my investigation in collaboration with a colleague from a field other than linguistics. Behavioral data, whether dealing with folklore, language, cognition, or their interrelationships, have in the past tended to be rigidly segmented and compartmentalized into folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology. The needs for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior, however, and for ex-

121 114 changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

114 [178] Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to several families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

127 Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

121 One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

• 121 tigation, the material and data needed to solve the problem, and the field procedures most likely to be useful.[3]

122 Preparing a research design is one thing; actual entrance into a Sea Island community is quite another. Because the islanders are suspicious of all outsiders, one group of investigators has suggested that research in the islands and in other black communities be conducted in conjunction with local, community-controlled agencies that provide services to the communities.[4] These agencies can be asked to verify the integrity of potential Sea Island investigators and to approve the uses to which they plan to put the results of their research: Not only do organizations of this sort have access to a wide range of information that would be useful to the researcher, but the researcher can reciprocate by making available to the agency any useful information that he or she acquires from outside sources. Coordinate research reduces the risk of community exploitation and is likely to produce positive results from the community.

124 No matter how careful one's planning has been, as I learned quickly, one may find it necessary to deviate from customary methods of assembling data and to adjust the procedures and time allotted for a study to correspond to the temperament and discretion of the informants. For example, included in the preliminaries made in preparation for my research was a word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants. Because the list was long, and the elicitation so painfully slow and exacting, I did not attempt to procure this information until almost two years after my initial investigation. By then the informants knew me well and were willing to tolerate such a tedious procedure. Even with their willing assistance, it took as long as a week, sometimes more, to complete the word list for one informant.

123 No research design or methodology, of course, can assure a successful investigation in any discipline in the Sea Island communities. In many ways the success or failure of a study becomes dependent on the islanders' response to the personality of the researcher, and their willingness to accept both researcher and project. Of primary importance, one must have a convincing reason for being on a given island. Patricia Nichols, to take one example, acquired entry into a river island community as a teacher—a profession highly valued by the Sea Islanders. According to her, working in a highly visible capacity at a job that made sense for the particular community chosen allowed her to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events.[5]

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# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in
this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with
the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South
Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
•121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea
Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about
them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about
the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself
how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West
African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a
bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one
491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns
Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically,
and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths
of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became:
hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the
musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on
these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this
very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

538 prepared to create and perform his entire tale within a reasonably short period of time.[3] He does not and cannot perform effectively in isolation. He is influenced immediately by the occasion of the tale, and the atmosphere in which and the audience for whom he is performing. His tale is designed not to be read but to be performed and heard. In written transcriptions of oral literature the words are captured on the page, while the real flavor of the tales and the real artistry of the teller—the actual narration, the actual "telling of the tale" by a gifted and skillful performer—are lost.

Because the many communicative techniques used in storytelling, both verbal and nonverbal, are outside the realm of written literature, until fairly recently they were not felt to be important in written interpretations of Sea Island or other oral traditions. Collections by Parsons and others are indeed excellent in the depiction of characteristic
538 201 features of plot, but they are devoid of the many kinesic communicative techniques that a teller uses to engage his listeners' attention and actually mesmerize them with gestures—hand movements, a turning of the head, a long pause, a shifting of the eyes, a long knowing stare. Yet kinesics are a part of the oral performance, and much that is communicated through gesture has not been accounted for in written transcriptions of Sea Island oral literature. Even obvious verbal techniques like mimicry, repetition, ideophones (words which convey images and meaning through their sound), and rhetorical questions often fail to be taken into consideration, an omission that subtracts substantially from the beauty of the tales even as it obscures cultural methods of communication and expression.[4]

121 While it is too much to expect one discipline to teach us to be linguists, ethnologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, the common element among these and other disciplines is the commitment to interpreting and understanding the human interaction in language and culture. The need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior is becoming increasingly more apparent. David DeCamp, for example, drew attention to this need for exchange of information and ideas between linguists and scholars in related fields as a result of his efforts to scale sequential language data to form what he calls a linguistic continuum. Though he was the first to apply the technique to linguistic data, DeCamp found that as a general procedure it has been known to psychologists and sociologists as the Guttman Scalogram Analysis for over twenty years.[5]

121 Dell Hymes also asserts that "a certain kind of information slips away" because of the lack of interdisciplinary approaches. To take an example, linguists, folklorists, and anthropologists rely on language samplings primarily for content, which provides an excellent means of delineating and analyzing elements of various cultures. Though folklorists and anthropologists may extract enough linguistic information to specify verbal genres—tales, prayers, myths, orations—they seldom specify features that one must know if one is actually to recognize instances of these genres in performance. On the other hand, linguists abstract grammar, for example, from speech data and tell us which utterances in sequences are grammatical and which are ungrammatical but they tell us little, if anything, about the various styles, modes, or contexts in which a given utterance may occur. Thus, while anthropologists acquire knowledge of social behavior and linguists acquire knowledge of language behavior, valuable information about cultures and language escapes when neither linguists nor anthropologists provide us with what Hymes calls the actual function of language within a society. We cannot assume, he goes on to say, that language has a homogenous function in every community, because ethnographic records suggest, for example, that "talk for talk's sake" is far from universal. Among the Gbaya of Central Africa, no one is regarded as skilled in narration; among the Wishram Chinook of the Columbia River, one does not talk when one has nothing that needs to be said; among the Paliyans of South India, by the age of forty men are reported as seldom speaking at all, and a talkative person is regarded with suspicion.[6]

121 201 In the area of nonverbal communication, Ray Birdwhistell discovered that body gestures in context had meaning "astonishingly like words in language." In the English, American, and German kinesic systems that he studied, he discovered that "there are body behaviors which function like significant sounds, that combine into simple or relatively complex units like words, which are combined into much longer stretches of structured behavior like sentences or even paragraphs." Gestures are culturally linked, and no one body position or motion can be said to be universal; no facial expression or body stance will convey the same meaning in every society.[7] Alfred Hayes summarizes Birdwhistell's basic assumptions underlying the systematic study of bodily movement and motions as follows:

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1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without meaning in the context in which it appears.
2. Like other aspects of human behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned and thus, subject to systematic analysis.
3. While recognizing the possible limitations imposed by particular biological substrata, until otherwise demonstrated, the systematic body motion of the members of a community is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs.
4. Visible body activity like audible acoustic activity systematically influences the behavior of other members of any particular group.
5. Until otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an investigable communicational function.
6. The meanings derived therefrom are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is investigated.
7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesic system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part.[8]

Some familiarity with body movements is important to the discussion of Sea Island literature because the performances of the individual are related to the function of the community of which he is a member, and have meaning in that context. Body expressions otherwise unique to certain African ancestral patterns may remain in the Sea Island communities, just as there are parallels in the language itself and in styles of dance and worship.

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Included in this discussion are examples of individual performing styles which are variations on a larger system of community-expected and -accepted behavior patterns during a storytelling event. According to Richard Dorson, there is a "group repertoire." There are indeed patterns of movements characteristic of *inland* black storytellers which are directly related to the culture as a whole. It was once assumed that most people in a subculture told the same tales in the same way. There is a very definite repertoire of gestures common to southern black sto-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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121 201 538 rytellers; every storyteller has command of these particular gestures and every southern black storyteller has these features in common with other members of the group. On closer observation of individual performers, however, we see that there is much variation and individuality of style. Once the group repertoire has been established, we can more clearly see the distinctions among performers.[9]

538 Beyond the area of kinesics, other nonverbal communicative interactions include such intrinsic components as the setting and atmosphere for storytelling and the degree to which audience participation influences and is actually a part of a Sea Island tale. Lacking these essential elements, most written versions of Sea Island, Caribbean, and some West African literatures appear as short, loosely strung-together episodic tales. The tales alone are barren and incomplete. They do not show the frequent words and phrases interjected by the listeners, nor do they indicate the subtle manner in which the speaker calls on them actually to help him along in telling his tale. Phillip Noss elaborates on this point: "When one reads tales that are meant to be presented orally, usually in a language other than the original, with little awareness of the cultural setting or the aesthetic principles and assumptions underlying the tale, it is not surprising if he concludes that the tales are merely action-packed episodes involving stock characters whose only dimension may be comic."[10]

The Western reader has been conditioned to judge language and literature through preconceived notions of the content of what an author writes, the organization and degree of development, and the style of the writing. The words are not heard, but a good writer's fervent hope is that the impact of the words will be felt, and consequently much of the writer's effort must be devoted to this task. In oral literature the performance, inclusive of audience participation, is as important as and in most cases more important than the actual content of the tale. For not only are the words heard, visualized, and felt, the whole narrative is actually experienced as one experiences a play. The characters that the performer creates are only as vivid and lifelike as the teller is able to make them. And how vivid they are made is often dependent on how enthusiastic the audience is. An excellent performer, when he 538 201 slaps his hands together and says "Bam! That one stuck!" can make the audience experience the impact of the blow that Ber Rabbit delivers to the tar baby. As the speaker gradually raises his hand higher and higher in the air to indicate the height to which the buzzard takes the audience participation and response in such communities helps in the understanding of their language and literature in its social context.

(121) It is to be hoped that more objective methods of describing communicative behavior in oral traditions will be included in future written versions of oral literature.

## The Storytellers

The performance of an individual within a culture is directly related to the expectations of the culture, and the individual performer usually respects these expectations. The Sea Island storytellers follow techniques for telling stories that have been passed on as tradition. The best storytellers are those who know how to evoke lifelike images in a listener's mind and create suspense and drama through the interactions of characters. How these goals are achieved is determined by the individual storyteller. The most common devices used to create intensity and excitement include repetition of words and phrases at strategic points in a story; mimicry, which may involve anything from the shrieking sounds of a hog or the loping motions of a running wolf to the twittering sound of a partridge as he inadvertently moves through an oat field; voice modulation, ranging from a very high-pitched, shrill tone indicative of nervousness, agitation, and excitement to a very low-pitched, quiet tone suggesting cautiousness and reserve; and various bodily gestures, such as placing the left hand in the right armpit and pumping the right arm up and down against the body to produce the sound of a large animal galloping in the distance.

Oral style, like written style, is idiosyncratic. The individual speaker will embroider his own style on certain features and thus add uniqueness to his performance. The tellers vary. Some are very fluent and the words flow with ease. Some hesitate and search for words and often resort to *ah*, *wime*, or other fillers to try to unify what they are saying. Some tellers are better at certain kinds of narratives than others. I found that Mr. Henry would not tell any tales about Ber Rabbit and his uncanny ways, but he could talk for hours about historical events such as the Garvey movement or the 1893 storm. His style, like his topics, was always elevated and serious. On the other hand, Mr. Oree would tell only humorous tales, and his preference for trivial

> 191 829 823 know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

114 197 ● 121 Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

195 rest you mouth!: shut up!
long eye: envy

192 Most linguists agree that lexicon is perhaps one of the most arbitrary features that languages borrow from one another, and it is in this area that they tend to borrow most extensively. As Talmy Givón has explained, when different linguistic groups come in contact, it is natural that the area of most acute linguistic conflict will be the lexicon; by borrowing words from each other, speakers resolve the communication conflict. But languages seldom borrow grammar.[13] (193) Thus, in areas where Gullah is spoken, it is well to understand that while the lexicon is primarily English, much of the underlying grammar is rooted in West African languages.

•121 In detailed analysis of Gullah I have used Walt Wolfram's "matrix of cruciality," selecting for discussion those features still persistent in Gullah speech.[14] Every effort has been made to present very technical material as nontechnically as possible, in order to assist readers in understanding peculiarities of Gullah speech, not only to help them appreciate the language but to suggest something of the rhythm and flow of the narratives and tales, a quality which, as I have noted, cannot be captured on paper.

## Features of Grammar

193 Many characteristic features of grammar and syntax set Gullah apart from other varieties of African-American speech.[15] Unlike standard English, which relies heavily on subordination to convey relationships between ideas, contemporary Gullah relies on coordination, or the combination of sentences that are short, abrupt, and loosely strung together. Gullah thus dispenses with many of the prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, and participles that tie together complex standard English sentences. In addition, the relationships between sentences are not necessarily specified through grammatical operations but may be left to be inferred from the usage or context.

The verb and pronoun systems are particularly distinctive in Gullah. Some distinguishing features of the verb structure include the uninflected verb, verb serialization, the introductory verb *say* [se], the complementizer *for* [fə], and verb reduplication.

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# Notes

## Preface

121 (113) (114) 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

(127) 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

(113) 3. See ibid., p. 21.

122 4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

113 123 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 123 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 609 113 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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192 10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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551 11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

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192 13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

•121 14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

193 15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

(113) 17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

(113) 20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

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113 1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

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126 1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

000 2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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# *Introduction*

121 This study grew out of my interest in the sociohistorical relationship between community, religion, and resistance as these concepts affected African-Americans during slavery. My focus is limited to the Gullahs of South Carolina for several reasons. First, a monographic approach allowed for more in-depth interpretations and analyses of community, religion, and resistance. Second, the Gullah slave community's religious legacy has not had the historical treatment it deserves in the scholarship. Third, this community of slaves provides a significant model for studying African-American adaptive capacities and retention of traditional African provenance.

The notion of community used in this book presupposes that subjectively the term represents a sense of collectivity and togetherness, based on a definite pattern of essentially positive relationships, possibly changing over time, and a sense of mutual dependence. Objectively speaking, community occurs when a group of social actors are bound by responsibility, accountability, and compromises made in order to maintain organization and stability. Hence, on a rational level, for the closeness and security which community offers, it extracts loyalty, obedience, relinquishing of some individual freedom, and personal authority.[1] (And community has strong political connotations if viewed in this light.) Essential to a community's development is the culture of the people involved. There are various ways of defining culture. Here it refers to creative, adaptive, dynamic patterns of behavioral meanings, which are inherited and historically transmitted through rituals, symbols, and systems of communication that represent societal understanding, awareness, and conceptions of life. Community and culture are intricately connected. Grasping the significance of one can lead to meaningful analyses of the other: "community is a culturally defined way of life."[2]

The above methods of considering community-culture provide one foundation for understanding the direction of this book on the Gullah socioreligious experience. It is also a way of interpreting the link between the meaning of community among the Gullahs and one major group of their African foreparents. These African communities of the Windward Coast (today Sierra Leone and Liberia) were structured under the sacred and secular authority of two secret societies—Poro for men and Sande for women. Nearly all West African ethnic groups had secret societies, but most were not mandatory organizations like Poro and Sande. Instead they were associations of exclusivity or privilege. Nevertheless, the prevalence and structure of such societies suggest that they could, if reinforced by similar but new traditions, and servicable in a new ambiance, be *adaptively* retained. Thus this volume argues that some adaptive concepts of community (and aspects of spirituality) inherited from secret societies fused with Gullah interpretations of Christianity, becoming part of folk religion in the slave quarters.

The second major theme of this study—religion—is, as previously stated, engaged with the first. If community broadly organizes human social existence and social relations, religion as employed herein, is an integral component of community and culture. It provides powerful, persuasive belief systems, symbols, and images of cosmic order which act as realistic explications of human experience and/or the human condition. The sacred symbols embodied in a people's religious beliefs synthesize their ethos and world view. In addition to interpreting reality cosmologically, Clifford Geertz suggests that the "moods and motivations" produced by religious orientation cast a "lunar light" over a people's secular life.[3] This view provides a foundation for my treatment of Gullah attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I argue that traditional African spiritual belief and cosmology, particularly that of the BaKongo and other Bantu peoples, found a significant niche within Gullah Christian practices and helped stage their folk religion. The strength and flexibility of some African spiritual customs, such as the use of sacred medicines, ancestor reverence, and beliefs about immortality facilitated merger into an African-Christian synthesis among the Gullahs.

Belief systems can be a source of interpreting social and psychological human processes, comprehending natural phenomena, or may recom-

121 mend ways of dealing with reality. The Gullahs defined life in sacred terms, an inherited African legacy.[4] Their introduction to Christianity reinforced this sense of the sacred but also raised questions regarding contradictions inherent in the teachings. Slaves who organized the 1822 revolt attempt in Charleston, called the Vesey Conspiracy, based their right to rebellion on several principles, among which were certain Christian beliefs extracted from the Bible. Yet slave masters and clergymen used the same Bible (albeit different texts) to explain *their* "right" to keep blacks in bondage. Both groups' beliefs determined their interpretations of scriptures, reflecting diametrically opposed interests and attitudes. Furthermore, as the more isolated Gullahs became "Christians," their spiritual orientation continued to foster independent ways of thinking. This was demonstrated by the Gullah's spiritual autonomy, in the structuring of their community-culture, their sense of morality, and sense of themselves as a people.

In this volume, I have tried to strike a balance between "pure" religion (for its own sake, other worldly or transcendental) and applied religion (its functional or empirical use) because both were practiced among slaves who ultimately adopted Christianity. Yet evidence sometimes points to a cloudy qualitative difference between the two. Some Gullah slaves accepted Christianity at face value as presented by missionaries and masters. Most did not, but instead blended transcendental aspects of Christianity with the everyday, paramount reality of their human experiences and aspirations.

Awareness of the empirical impact of religious instruction, and in some cases the lack thereof, is important for understanding how and why folk religion flourished among the Gullahs. The religious instruction
121 movement also provides a way of contemplating the reasons for Christian
175 instruction on the part of whites. Almost from the beginning a few whites, despite much opposition, attempted to Christianize slaves. Some slaves responded warmly. Yet a concerted process of slave conversion among the majority of coastal Carolina slaves did not begin in earnest by whites until around 1830. Even then, the way was sometimes filled with pitfalls created by a reluctant master class and disinterested clergy. Furthermore, the culturally and geographically isolated black population, whose main spiritual tradition still rested on Africanity, showed only lukewarm interest for some time. Certainly there was exposure to Christianity before 1830—from acculturated, privileged blacks and occasional spiritu-

121 175 ally moved ministers and planters. Also the Great Awakening of the colonial era touched South Carolina even if it did not linger there for very long. And early Methodists actively tried bringing Christianity to the Gullahs, but were under bans of proscription as an antislavery denomination. Hence, prior to the movement begun by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1829, most slaves working in the fields received their "Christian" instruction from fellow slaves. When slaves accepted Christianity under Methodist and later Baptist tutelage, they embraced it selectively, fusing Christianity with African traditions to create Gullah folk religion. This religion was a means of explaining experiential reality for the Gullahs on sacred and secular levels. If community was the base or substance of Gullah life, spirituality (a more appropriate term, I think, than religion) was the superstructure upon which the foundation was posited.

The final area of investigation in my broadly considered three-tier thematic construct, is resistance—perhaps the most debated issue in the North American bondage experience. There is a tendency to interpret resistance in its strictest sense—as bloodletting or flight to freedom. These are obvious means of rebellion, and from the beginning, African-Carolinians were a restless, insurgent group. This study is a further comment on that spirit of resistance. Yet I primarily delve into what are in my opinion equally meaningful ways of analyzing resistance to enslavement. The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy denotes the end (as far as historical knowledge goes) of concerted efforts at black liberation among the Gullahs. The revelation of the Conspiracy and subsequent debates over the value of religious instruction (since the event was planned under the guise of religion) ushered in, paradoxically, a movement to convert the slave population in South Carolina. From outward appearances the Vesey Conspiracy marked the end of organized black resistance in South Carolina. This is the juncture at which I believe the question of resistance takes on expanded meaning. I attempt to demonstrate that resistance against white power and hegemony was conspicuous in the Gullahs' sense of cultural autonomy, authoritative, creative community-building, and their spiritual disengagement from the slaveocracy's version of Christian teachings. The means and methods of their accomplishment are viewed through the Gullah community and folk religion.

121 127 I have benefited greatly from the works of previous writers. W. E. B. DuBois was among the first to discuss elements of continuity between

121 the African tradition and the "spiritual strivings" of African-Americans.
He was also a pioneer in expressing the historic role and significance of
127 black religion as a means of political protest. And Sterling Brown, an-
other sage of African-American cultural thought, observed over forty
years ago, that much could be learned of black life-style and values through
studying the folklore of slaves. Brown, one of the earliest interpreters of
black thought, viewed folktales, spirituals and narratives as historical
documents that spoke "with convincing finality against the legend of con-
tented slavery." Thus more recent scholarship on the slave community,
from which my own work draws directly, is part of a tradition begun
with the exploratory works of African-American writers of previous gen-
121 erations. Among current scholars, perhaps the most extensive elabora-
tion of the importance of black culture as a means of delving into the
114 black mind-set is provided by Lawrence Levine in *Black Culture and Black
Consciousness*. Levine's seminal work provides an impressive continuum
for probing black culture and black thought through analysis of slave folk
beliefs, spirituals, and African-American fusion of the sacred and secu-
lar. Levine's general discussions of the significance of African traditions
and behavior patterns among bondspeople is supported in the particular
case of the Gullahs. He debates, as I do, the contention that slaves did
not oppose bondage and he maintains that if historians cannot perceive
the "sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the so-
cietal system created by southern slaveholders," it is perhaps the histo-
rians' problem and not the slaves'.[5]

My book is a regionally limited and more concentrated study involving only the period of enslavement. Levine's work permeates myriad areas of black thought, encompassing bondage *and* freedom, allowing for an emphasis somewhat different from mine and for a greater range of cultural and aesthetic treatment. Bondage takes up only two, albeit important, trend-setting chapters of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. My attention focuses on a full interpretation of one group's spiritual experience in a manner not previously explored. For instance, I see evidence of a strong New Testament ideology and outlook among the Gullahs as they embraced Christianity. Levine does not ignore this impact, but sees more Old Testament messages in general African-American consciousness.[6] Additionally, my work discusses the means by which slaves may have forged African sacred-secular traditions and offers explanations about *how* meanings of religious symbols and rituals related to social processes

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and community structure. Ultimately my study presents an amplification of rather than disagreement with most of Lawrence Levine's interpretations. Our methods are not always comparable yet our motivations seem to grow from similar concerns and lead to complementary conclusions—at least in terms of the bondage experience.

A pioneering and, for me, encouraging work on slave religion is Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Raboteau writes that one purpose of his book was to provide a "rough sketch for further, more exhaustive examination" of slave religion.[7] Nearly a decade has passed since his book was first published. Slave religion, though considered the pillar of African-American culture, remains largely unexplored through historical scholarship (even Raboteau's background was in religious studies).[8]

Thematically, Raboteau's book and mine run parallel: the African heritage, slave conversion, religious life in the slave community, and the relationship of religion to resistance. Yet we treat these issues differently. In his early chapter entitled "Death of the Gods," Raboteau summarily states that certain factors "tended to inhibit the survival of African culture and religion in the United States." Whatever African influences remained, says Raboteau, are found in "spirituals, ring shouts and folk beliefs." In the case of Gullahs, and perhaps other slave communities, his two contentions seem contradictory.[9] Spirituals, the ring shout, and folk beliefs tell us most of what we know (at least from the Gullahs themselves) about Gullah religion. These cultural traits move us as close, perhaps, as we can come to understanding a *black Weltanschauung*, and they were intrinsic to Gullah religion. If we probe folk religion and culture, it leads to some general insights, as Levine demonstrated, about slave religion. I examine the manifestations and meanings (as symbols and rituals) of various elements of Gullah folk belief. Then I compare my hypotheses with African spiritualism, cosmology, and other beliefs. I do not argue for "survivals," a somewhat lifeless term implying passive existence. But I do argue for the presence of dynamic, creative, cultural trends of African provenance among the Gullahs, which they adapted to their concept of Christianity and integrated into New World black collective consciousness.

Raboteau and I both expend much energy on the slave conversion process because it is crucial to the black religious experience in America. On this issue we are probably in closer, though not complete agreement.

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121 114 Christianity was capable, says Raboteau, of "producing a Christian social order based on the observance of mutual duty, slave to master and master to slave."[10] I found however, an abundance of literature on the "duty" of the former, but comparatively little on the "duty" of the latter. Certainly, a liberal attitude existed in the religious sector of the South—probably the only sector where such ideas could survive. Raboteau provides an excellent treatment of eighteenth-century religious activity. Early Methodism is the best, though not the only example of religious liberalism. The emergence of a few independent black churches is another. In the mid nineteenth-century Lowcountry, this tradition was to some extent epitomized by Methodist lay preachers who supplied the plantation missions.[11] As far as slaveholders and most regular clergy were concerned however, amelioration of bondage via religion was a minor consideration when compared to the influence of social control ideology. Raboteau seems to argue for balance between white conversion of slaves for moral and spiritual reasons and the use of Christianity to encourage docility and submission. That may have been true for the South in general. I do not ignore the white moral and spiritual imperative, but the weight of the argument in coastal South Carolina leans heavily toward the use of religion to encourage submissive personalities.

Raboteau understandably desires to "preserve the texture of slave testimony and to avoid forcing the experience reflected in that testimony into any preconceived theoretical framework."[12] I also try and conserve the historical reality of the black religious experience. However I saw important elements in the Gullah experience in need of interpretation and I sometimes practiced what some scholars have called imaginary reconstruction of historical facts.[13] When empirical data implied theoretical constructions or thematic conclusions I did not avoid hermeneutics. This is most obvious in the difference between Raboteau's and my treatment of two issues—religious life and rebellion. Our conclusions are, I think, somewhat similar. Our methodologies and discussions of operative, determining forces that explain these phenomena differ. Also (as is the case with Levine's work), our emphasis differs. One obvious explanation for this is that I am writing about a community, not the entire slave South. Yet contrasts go deeper than that. Raboteau sees a complex ambiguity in slave life and religious orientation which supports accommodation as well as rebelliousness, and which ultimately offered "freedom," and "transcendence" for the "individual."[14] Certainly among the Gullahs a range

•121 114 of responses to religion existed. But *particular* responses predominated and I emphasize these. Thus I structurally explore and interpret not only the spiritual experience, but religion as a *determining factor* in Gullah ideas of liberation, resistance-culture, and community organization. Although my book is primarily historical, it also addresses psychological, sociological, and anthropological issues. That apparently is not Raboteau's intention. Thus, thematic similarity between the two books is deceiving. Still, Raboteau's fruitful beginning furnished grounding for my study and hopefully, for others, in an area of black history worthy of and needing much more examination.

114 Two other scholars deserve mention here even though their major works are not directly on slave religion. My work has been influenced by Vincent Harding because he places the historical black experience in progressive-nationalistic, radical-protest, freedom-quest perspectives. His book, *There Is a River*,[15] is a poetic, apocalyptic historical message that *struggle*, more than "survival," permeated black motivations in the North and South, among slave and free. Harding's work is a statement that may ostensibly address a black popular audience.[16] Yet it is no less a significant contribution to the historical literature.

The late Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* explores black cultural beliefs and behavior as well as examines the black family. And if black religion is one key to the nature of black life and culture, the black "family," despite historical (and present-day) assaults, is the other. Gutman analyzes the adaptive nature of black culture, specifically patterns of family cohesion. Yet researching familial associations involved investigating origins of marrying practices and ceremonies, belief systems, kin obligations versus decisions to flee, childrearing practices, sexuality, and collective organization. Gutman is exceptional in inquiring into the African past and relating this to the above deterministic features of black culture.[17] No historian has made such frontal attempts to integrate specific aspects of Africanity into the historical functioning of the black family.

Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* set the tone for a more conservative view of slave life: slaves "accommodated" their bondage, masters were "paternalists" who exercised their "hegemonic" power with a sense of "duty" and "burden."[18] *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is a culminating achievement based on years of research and writing centered around issues related to the above concepts, and despite its conservative conclusions, is part of

114 spired these considerations). Yet my examination of symbolic elements,
behaviorisms, and rituals within Gullah culture lead to interpretations
114 and conclusions different from Genovese's. The socioreligious connection
that encouraged and helped fashion black life did not, among the
● 121 Gullahs, rest "on a politically dangerous kind of individualism."[23] What Genovese interprets as conservatism and individualism, I see as forged resistance culture and group consciousness.

121 Slave religion had its individualistic tendencies. Yet on the positive side these enhanced a sense of personal dignity and self-esteem. Of course some slaves were involved mainly for spiritual, otherworldly gratification. But more significantly, religion was a support for community-building processes, collective strength, and solidarity. Life represented more than "endurance," "accommodation," or "survival," but an effective means of resisting the hegemonic trappings Genovese writes about. Genovese also sees Christianity as binding "master and slave together in universal communion,"[24] though contributing to their separation. *Communion?* It is doubtful that slaves accepted this psychic bonding. My evidence points to the contrary—to a people defending their collective spiritual separation and independence.

121 Genovese is confusing when he acknowledges the African heritage in
the slave work ethic, dancing, cooking, and even housing, but maintains
114 that "spiritual collectivism retreated before the advance of Christianity." In place of Africanity slaves "accepted Christianity's celebration of the individual soul," which became their "weapon of personal and community survival."[25] This "community" is a type of nationalism in its most conservative form—religious. It is a sort of knee-jerk reaction (this nationalism) that replaces true struggle or resistance and forces slaves into a Gordian knot with the planters pulling the strings. This nationalism confines slaves as willing social, psychological, and cultural dependents.[26] Without the input of resistance, this type of religious nationalism takes a conservative, nonprogressive emphasis. But among the Gullahs resistance to bondage on a number of levels remained a facet of black life. It is important to historical inquiry that the experiences of bondspeople be examined in terms they help define, as one does with other groups—slaveholders for instance. Otherwise one risks espousing a kind of retrospective cultural chauvinism. Why interpret the psyche of the slave through the ideology of the slave master? Or, how much can

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114 we learn about workers by studying them through management ideology?

Professor Genovese describes the slave South in prebourgeois or precapitalist terms, a theory other historians have adopted. One can see the convenience and appeal of this definition as a means of explaining social and economic relations. Paternalism is a prebourgeois ideology for the most part. Paternalistic, feudalistic, or signorial relationships characterize societies where political and religious structures are inextricably tied to their economies. There is less class cohesion, or class consciousness in prebourgeois societies because of the simplicity of production organization and the "self-sufficiency" of communities. Within such an historical period, the oppressed group supposedly never become *conscious* of the *true* economic driving forces behind historical movement. Nor are the oppressed *conscious* of their own victimization because class relations in these societies remain complex and concealed. This is a contrast to the stark simplicity of class interest and exploitation under capitalism.[27] Not all of the South, especially that which provides Genovese's model, fits the economic pattern. Plantations were largely dependent upon an international market for profit. They were not "self-sufficient" since other areas of the country and world supplied them with provisions and commodities of life-style. But the social pattern in prebourgeois society raises more interesting questions if applied to the bondspeople—the oppressed. Can we say that slaves were not *conscious* of their *oppression* (that they had only *false consciousness*)?[28] Slave testimony indicates otherwise, though not in the Marxist-Leninist sense. The wealth of masters and impoverishment of slaves is evidence of the "alienation" (lack of ownership of or equitable return for labor) of the "producers" (slaves) from their "commodity" (fruits of labor). Oppression and victimization were realized on the conscious level, but slaves' reaction to these forces needs to be measured less from a twentieth-century perspective.

121 As far as class relations being concealed, in the slaves' case under a web of paternalism and hegemony, the polarization between master and slave, especially when the latter was a field hand, was real. And of course Marx (who developed this analysis) was not referring to bondage, but to feudalism. In the latter case, relations may be less obvious because, among other things, peasants have a claim to the land they cultivate, race is not a factor, cultural differences are not as divisive, and in some societies,

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● 121 the peasants and the lords were distant relations. Thus a system of patronage, dependency, and moralism could exist. But did slave masters need to morally justify a system of exploitation against blacks? On the individual level they occasionally did, especially with favored slaves. But as a class, history indicates that in the final outcome, slaveholders had no more moral imperative toward the slaves than capitalists have had toward industrial workers.

Genovese's sources certainly point to contradictory aspects of bondage, most of which supports paternalism, conservative Christianity practiced by slaves, and black accommodation. The complexity of his argument and thoroughness of his research is food for thought, to say the least. Where were paternalism and accommodation embraced by blacks? John Blassingame wrote that if Stanley Elkins' "Sambo" existed at all, he (or she) was probably a "big house" inhabitant.[29] Could the same be said for the enslaved religious accommodationists if they existed as a group? *Roll, Jordan, Roll* contains discussions of blacks in numerous occupational roles and situations—from preachers to prostitutes, from children to old folk. But it is difficult to find the workers in the fields—those who perhaps represent the "beauty and power of the human spirit" in ways that mammies, drivers, body servants, and artisans may not. Our glimpse of field hands comes through only vaguely. Most social actors in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* are white, or they are the "privileged" blacks, more likely bearers and beneficiaries of accommodation, than people in the quarters. Genovese implies as much about "life in the Big House." But he eases out of the contradiction by asserting that no social stratification existed between field hands and house servants who identified with white culture.[30] Thus we are left thinking these black "integrationists" carried accommodation to the slave quarters and the field hands bought it. Perhaps the author gives too much credit to the capacity of "big house" and "favored" slaves to fashion their brand of "nationalism" and impose it on the larger black population. I think at least two types of nationalism developed—one from the slave quarters and one originating with the "favored" groups. In any case more studies are now taking a less monolithic approach to slave society. Just as there were many Souths, there were many slave communities, and their complexities await more examination. We know that slaves created communities. We are just beginning to investigate the nature, structure, and stratification of these communities. Recent, more regionally focused works ask new questions, but also

121 seem to reinforce the 1970s "slave community" consensus to which previously mentioned (and many unmentioned) scholars contributed so prolifically. Inherent in that consensus is the theme which on some level we all agree: among African-Americans the oppression of bondage bred resistance and active, even if it was not always open, rebellion.

121 The primary methodologies used in structuring this book are comparative and dialectical. A comparative model is adopted because I wish to
demonstrate the relationship between African, white Protestant, and
128 Gullah worlds. Thus in Part I the African background is discussed. Here
I ask the reader's forbearance. This discussion of the African slave trade,
121 ethnic displacement, and the significance of the African socioreligious
legacy, is necessary because these relate to the entire thrust of the book
and because my theory regarding ethnic origins and African influences
will be controversial, yet I believe, sound in plausability.

I agree with Eugene Genovese that to some extent, "an understanding
of the slaves requires some understanding of the masters and of others
128 who shaped a complex slave society."[31] Part II, consisting of two chapters, begins my dialectic of black-white counterpoint and deals with South Carolina up to the War for Independence. One chapter is devoted to missionaries and masters. The next chapter, on the black religious experience, deals with the Great Awakening and that limited group who laid a foundation for acculturation and black-to-black spiritual interaction. Part III continues the black-white counterpoint. Chapter 5 develops concepts of black rebelliousness, and the period of the American War for Independence is crucial. It represents a time of religious liberalism on the one hand and black resistance on the other. Yet the ultimate outcome of the new "republicanism" was retrenchment of old socioeconomic alliances and forces. The black response is rebellion. Immediate white reaction is repression. But on another level white "thinking men" believed in a safer, possibly more successful method of dealing with black recalcitrance. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze and narrate the movements, primarily by Methodist laymen and Baptist planters, to convert the masses of Gullahs. These chapters also interpret Gullah responses to Christianity, slavery, and life in bondage. In Part IV the counterpoint technique is dropped. Throughout this book I attempt to present a picture of plantation life among Gullahs, as well as a view of slave religion and conversion. But Part IV is devoted fully to offering a presentation of Gullah socioreligious culture in a collective setting. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 sug-

114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 771 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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175 If the results of Christian instruction were measured by numbers of
rebellions following Vesey and Turner, it could be said that insofar as
status quo proponents were concerned, such instruction of bondspeople
was eminently successful. Slaves appeared to accept Protestantism taught
in a spirit purposely antithetical to their will to freedom. Emphasis was
on authority, dependence on future rewards and punishments for suffering
or wrongdoing on earth, and a profound inequality between master
and slave. This seemed especially the case in the Sea Islands. There no
widespread slave conspiracy or rebellion was known of, and Christianity
appeared well entrenched by the time of freedom.

This study examines the Christian conversion process among the Gullahs
•121 in an effort to understand these slaves' interpretation of Christianity
175 and the motives behind attempts to Christianize them. It is hypothesized
that Gullah slaves of coastal Carolina used Christianity as an ideology
with strong connotations supporting their sense of freedom. Early efforts
to resist bondage, represented fusing Christianity with Africanity to provide
a militant nationalism articulated by the black rebels of Charleston.
Failure of that Conspiracy shook the Gullah community and may have
facilitated a new adaptive structure in which slaves selectively employed
Christianity in ways important to their own social existence. Slaves continued
to oppose bondage, not with physical force, but by creating a
strong, religious collective which shielded them from a sense of alienation.
But their experiences were also based on an African world view
and cultural structure though conceptually expressed in Christian terms.
In the new religion, the slaves found some features reminiscent of their
African socioreligious past. It also offered an explanation for their historical
121 situation, which inspired currents of hope. On the Sea Islands, Gullahs
partly used the moral teachings of Christ as a basis for community
175 structure and organization. Yet they saw no contradiction in refusing to
797 blindly internalize everything they were taught. Thus Gullahs did not
trespass against their own moral sense or jeopardize their integrity as a
people struggling against oppression. Their retention of an African world
121 view enabled them to maintain an appreciation of life on a collective
level, striving to preserve the group consciousness that was a main ingredient
of African heritage. Hence Christian and African traditions helped
shape the resistance culture and plantation commonwealth that evolved
in the slave quarters. In this sense religious instruction of the slaves can-

not be measured merely from the standpoint of its negative use as a conservative force, but rather in relation to its value to slave life, community, and the slaves' efforts to remain spiritually free. 121

The present study then elucidates the role of slave religion among the Gullahs. Slave folk religion, comparable to the elaboration of a new Sea Island dialect of English, facilitated and, to no small degree, made possible the cohesion of a New World culture, Gullah culture. The approach which is attempted here will naturally involve an examination of the slave trade, Christian conversion, and the heritage of West African socioreligious and philosophical traditions to the extent that they were serviceable in bondage.

[p. 26 is blank]

771 Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new reli-
567 gion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive
and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of
177 Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a
121 black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside
177 forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

# *Notes*

## *Introduction*

1. C. J. Calhoun, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in Macfarlane's Proposal," *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 369, and his "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 109–16. For other views of community, see for instance Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); and Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). 121 113

2. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89; C. J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 159. While Calhoun's views on community are useful here, we strongly disagree on other issues, especially regarding his anti-E. P. Thompson view of how ideologies affect laboring classes. Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, passim. [114]

3. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90–105, 124.

4. Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 173–76, 179, 183–85; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old New* (London: James Clarke 1928), 187–88; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 2–16; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 85–93.

5. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965, first pub. 1903), 213–21, 337–49; Julius Lester, ed. *The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1971) I: 252–62, 277–82; Manning Marable "The Faith of W. E. B DuBois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1984): 15–33; Sterling Brown, et al., eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Dryden Press, 1941); 6, 412–21; Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 9, Pt. 2 (Summer, 1968) 417–37. Stuckey's newly completed work is an addition to the new scholarship. However it was unavailable when my book went to press. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3–135, 54.

• 121 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.

113 7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

(114) 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

114 113 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–98, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35, E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–37; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

114 567 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

114 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.

113 23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.

113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
175 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling
567 represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in
Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memo-
113 ries of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-
versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The
113 Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
199 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968;
113 repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

114 6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-
113 guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

179 Skin and hair. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able
177 to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her
178 homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

741 Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health
Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission,
178 Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau
758 Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship
821 education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,
Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan
533 to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities
668 throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk
128 through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star
● 121 Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the out-
177 siders with intentions that have nothing to do with
the survival of the communities they found as they
178 moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Purpose of Dissertation

• 121 In recent years linguists have recognized that historical change can be observed in children's acquisition of a first language, in the sign language of the deaf, and in newly developing languages like pidgins and creoles. The immediate aim of the present study is to provide evidence from a rapidly changing creole that language change can be observed in the present, across age and social groups, within a cohesive speech community. As a contribution to an emerging theory of linguistic variation, it will provide evidence that linguistic variation is systematic both for individuals and for the speech community, is inherent to language change, and can be activated by social factors which may be different for each community.

This study is also seen as a contribution to the growing documentation of the history of Black Americans in
121 the United States. Gullah, as the language spoken by the
197 vast majority of those slaves imported to the coastal rice plantations of colonial South Carolina, is in some senses a more native American language than those dialects of English

121 197 spoken by early settlers from the British Isles. Gullah in its earliest stages developed from the needs of speakers of many West African languages for a language of mutual intelligibility. The subsequent changes in this creole have come about as the functions for which the language was used increased and as its speakers began to interact on a more socially equal level with speakers of standard English. Because of the historical patterns of migration by blacks from the coastal plantations to fields in the Mississippi delta and then to urban ghettos of the north, Gullah probably serves as the source for those dialects of English which are unique to Black Americans. As such, Gullah and the changes it has undergone serve as an important base for discussions of the language varieties used by much of the black population in the United States.

## 1.1 Change and the Post-creole Continuum

For purposes of the discussion which follows, certain central terms will be defined. Pidgin is used here in the sense of a language variety which develops in a contact situation between speakers of different native languages. As such, a pidgin is no one's first language, it is relatively unstable, and it is used for a limited range of communicative functions. As the pidgin becomes used for a wider range of functions and as its structure becomes more stabilized, it sometimes acquires native speakers who use it as a first language. At this stage, the language variety

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is said to be a creole. Some creoles exist in contact with the official standard variety of the language with which they correspond. When social conditions are favorable, such a creole merges with the standard. During the period of merger, a post-creole continuum exists which ranges from speech showing highly creolized structures, similar to those of the pidgin stage and very different from those of the standard, to speech which is nearly that of the official standard in grammatical structure. The post-creole stage of Gullah is the subject of the present study.

In his discussion of the general phenomenon of a post-creole speech continuum, DeCamp (1971) proposes that two conditions are necessary for the development of the post-creole stage of a creole:

1) a correspondence between the official communicative standard and the creole
2) a recent breakdown of formerly rigid social stratification, with differing degrees of acculturation for sub-groups.

Communities in which Gullah is spoken now meet these two conditions. The official standard for the region is English, although the spoken variety of this standard is a low-prestige dialect of the standard. The social conditions are also met. Formerly rigid social and economic segregation along racial lines has broken down to a significant extent in schools, businesses, and politics within the region. Economic conditions for many members of Gullah-speaking communities have changed for the better over the

121 past four decades. Geographic mobility and opportunities
197 for participation in portions of mainstream culture have increased both the motivation and the chances to use the standard variety of English.

DeCamp describes four alternative final stages for the creole life-cycle as follows: continuation without change, extinction, evolution into a 'normal language,' and merger with the corresponding standard. I would like to propose a slightly different schema, in which four alternatives are seen as potential stages in the life of a creole, which can be stopped at any point by relevant social and geographic factors. Two of the four alternatives are different from those of DeCamp in important ways. Instead of 'continuation without change,' I suggest that 'continuation without significant change' is more accurate, since no language used by living speakers exists without exhibiting some change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language,' I suggest rather 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' is a preferred characterization, since creoles are 'normal' languages in every structural sense although they may have a more limited range of functions than an official standard. At this stage the language variety is often associated with a particular social group or geographic region and is viewed as a low-prestige dialect of the standard language. The standard dialect with which it can merge at the final stage of its life-cycle is that dialect which has been standardized,

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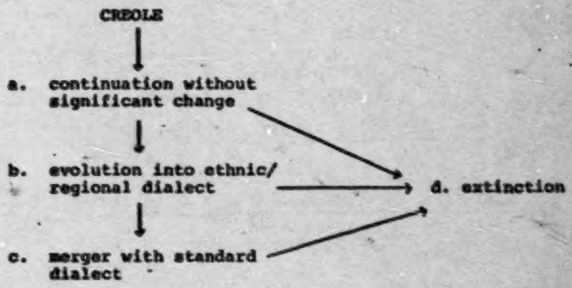
often through writing, and is the high-prestige dialect of the standard language. The following diagram shows these possible stages in the post-creole life cycle:


CREOLE
a. continuation without significant change
b. evolution into ethnic/ regional dialect
c. merger with standard dialect
d. extinction

According to such a schema, a creole would go through stages (a) and (b) before reaching (c), but could go directly to (d) at any point in its history, given the relevant social circumstances. The stage of 'extinction' can mean both that the creole has no more living speakers as well as that attitudes toward the language variety are such that it is no longer considered a separate entity, distinct in some degree from all other languages. In his discussion of creoles, DeCamp considers Gullah to be an extinct creole. As the analysis of linguistic variables in Chapter 4 will show, for certain grammatical categories some speakers have systematic

121 197 differences from other varieties of English which would indicate the continuing life of the creole. DeCamp's theory of a language continuum at the post-creole stage makes it possible to understand stages (a) through (c) as co-existing synchronically for a given speech community, thereby mitigating the problem of determining precisely the stage which characterizes a particular community at a given point in time. In the speech community studied here, individuals can be found whose speech reflects all three stages. Certain speakers are moving faster than others toward merger with the standard, and selected social factors appear to influence their rate of change. The continuum theory legitimizes the variation which has become increasingly evident in all modern studies of the language used in such communities.

The notion of a linguistic continuum allows us to better understand why different linguists might look at the same speech community and describe the language variety used variously as a 'creole' or as a 'dialect.' At the stage in which a post-creole community is moving toward a non-standard dialect of the standard language, valid comparisons can be made both with the creole grammar and with the standard grammar--forward and backward, as it were. Thus Labov (1969) has described verb forms used in an urban language variety spoken mainly by speakers of West African descent in terms of a dialect of the standard, whose differences from standard English are the result of relatively low-level

121 phonological rules. Stewart (1969), on the other hand, has
197 maintained that the same surface differences result from
underlying structural differences, having their origin in a
creole variety of English which preceded the nonstandard
dialect used by many blacks. Placing the language variety
under discussion within a broader continuum, it becomes
easier to see how both Stewart and Labov could find equally
valid correspondences on either end of this continuum.

| creole | nonstandard dialects | standard |
|---|---|---|
| GULLAH | BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR | NETWORK ENGLISH |
| | | [WHITE SOUTHERN ENGLISH] |

Figure 1. Language Varieties in the Gullah Post-Creole Continuum

121 The place of the White Southern English dialect in this continuum is problematic and outside the scope of the present discussion, but its place as part of such a continuum should be noted (see Wolfram 1974 for a discussion of the relationship of white Southern speech to Vernacular Black English in rural Mississippi).

The view which such a continuum permits of the

121 nonstandard dialect spoken by many blacks in the United States of African ancestry has two important pragmatic consequences. For educators of children who speak this dialect on entering school, the creole origins of the dialect can be emphasized as a means of drawing attention to the significant differences between the children's language and that used in the classroom, particularly in standardized reading and test materials (see Traugott, 1976 for a detailed comparison of some major differences between English-related pidgins, creoles, and dialects of Black English). For linguists concerned with writing comprehensive grammars of English, the correspondence between this significant minority dialect and the standard can be emphasized, thereby fostering a more comprehensive view of the language as a whole. It may even be the case that consideration of dialect variation, such as that which exists between Black English and standard English dialects, will provide evidence to help decide certain theoretical issues (see Carden, 1973 for such a claim). It has become increasingly clear that grammatical analyses which make no provision for systematic variation within and across dialects will be seriously inadequate in accounting for speaker and communal competence.

## 1.2 Issues in Variation and Change

Variation as an integral part of linguistic change has been studied systematically only for the past decade or

121 so. The publication of "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change" by Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968) marks the beginning of a significant focus on variation within linguistic systems. An important shift was begun from a view of linguistic phenomena in terms of only categorical divisions, with discrete boundaries, toward a view of at least some of the same phenomena in terms of continuous processes, with no clearly defined natural boundaries. In a sense, this shift may reflect a change in philosophical orientation from the Aristotelian categorical thinking which has characterized much of Western European thought to that of the more process-oriented thinking which has developed in America through the work of major philosophers like Whitehead, Dewey, and Mead.

12 Two major models for treating such continuous processes in linguistic systems have developed since the publication of that important article; these models differ chiefly on the basis of what aspects of linguistic phenomena they continue to treat in categorical terms. The model developed initially by Labov (1969) and extended by G. Sankoff (1973), Cedergren and D. Sankoff (1974), and G. Sankoff (1974) has utilized the 'variable rule' as a central concept. The variable rule has permitted expression of systematic individual variation for some grammatical items, while maintaining the isomorphism between the grammar of the individual and that of the speech community

12 197 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

### 1.3 Overview

121 128 Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer fE, a static-locative preposition (to), and the third person singular pronouns se and Em. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in bus
and the sound of the unstressed
vowel in Cuba

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175 into the late 1700's. The significance of this population balance for setting the tone for subsequent development of this important English colony has been largely overlooked. Unlike other major immigrant groups who colonized the Atlantic coast, the West African group brought no written language through which to preserve a record of its activities in the early colonization. Inheritors of a vigorous oral tradition, the settlers from West Africa brought stories, customs, and traditions which are as yet preserved only sporadically in written form by folklorists and in Southern short stories and novels. As the two groups from northern Europe and western Africa lived and worked together in approximately equal numbers, a new culture evolved which has been different enough from mainstream culture in the United States to evoke stereotyping, and which bears testimony to the impact which West African traditions has had upon its development.

•121 The Southern heritage which took root in this colony and spread west to Mississippi, and even into Texas in later years, embraced many complex patterns of human interaction: a hospitality familiar to the chiefs' homes in southern Nigeria; an orientation to family and kinship strong enough to foster jokes about Southern cousins; musical and storytelling traditions which defy description as a blend of their two major sources, and yet seem different from either; and distinctive speech patterns which have been used by various dramatists and novelists to evoke humor and scorn, while

121 serving as sources of both shame and group unity for their
speakers. One portion of these speech patterns is the subject
121 of the present investigation: that language variety described
197 by linguists as a creole, now in the post-creole stage of
development, spoken primarily by descendants of the original African immigrants. Labeled *Gullah* or *Sea Island Creole* by linguists, and known as *Gullah*, *Geechee*, or *country-talk* by its speakers, this language variety has speakers along the coastal strip between northern Florida and southern North Carolina. Its home base, however, is a smaller area within South Carolina which follows the boundaries of the earliest plantation system between what is now Georgetown County (the county just north of Charleston) and Jasper County on the Georgia border. Both Georgia and North Carolina lie outside the home base of the creole originally, since Georgia was a nonslave settlement until 1750 (Wood, 1974:260), and what is now North Carolina was sparsely settled during the early years of colonization. During the period in which the area's distinctive cultural patterns were being set, a relatively small area of South Carolina formed the central location of the African immigrant population.

The choice of Gullah as the language variety spoken by the majority of the African group and its descendants was not a foregone conclusion. It was a choice related to the subservient position of the slaves from West Africa in the colonial society. As Reinecke (1969) observes, three general

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121 types of immigration may be distinguished from the linguistic
197 point of view. The first type, settlement in enclaves which preserve ethnic individuality and language even though cut off from their parent groups, was characteristic of parts of central Europe prior to the nineteenth century. The second type, assimilation into the established society with total or almost total loss of ethnic identity and language, has been typical of highly industrialized and newly established countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, and certain countries in South America. Assimilation is easier if the immigrants are of the same skin color as the established group and share important cultural traditions. In colonial coastal South Carolina, European settlers from England, France, Scotland, and Wales followed this pattern of assimilation. The third type of immigrant adaptation has been characteristic of plantation laborers who are of a different race, culture, and language from their colonial masters. Brought into the colony as either slaves or contract laborers, these immigrants have not been able to maintain their own languages or to assimilate fully into the established group. For laborers whose contact with the homeland has been effectively cut off, who are thrown into daily contact with fellow laborers speaking different languages and of different cultural traditions, and who are permitted little or no chance of participation in the social life of their masters, development of an interlanguage can be seen a

121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where
slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the
Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land
between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

## 2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed community. The vast majority of trips made off the island are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few people come onto the island without an express invitation from some island resident, because of the difficulty of access. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the skilled in bad weather.

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464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a
limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland
blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and
have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social
and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks,
but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the
two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic
choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
•121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim
will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more
important influence on choosing to use that variety than
simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in
their speech than do island residents, despite the latter
group's greater geographic isolation.

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## CHAPTER 3

## FIELD WORK PROCEDURES

### 3.0 Overview

121 Having been raised in the white community of an adjacent
123 county in South Carolina, I recognized early that
establishing rapport with the black community in rural
Georgetown County on the level conducive to good research
would be one of the most difficult parts of the field work
for the present study. Accordingly, I sought the advice of
others who had done field work in rural South Carolina and
in non-European communities in the southwest. Through J.
121 Herman Blake and his colleague, Triloki Pandey, of the University
of California at Santa Cruz, I became aware of the
concept of action anthropology, first developed in the work
of anthropologists from the University of Chicago on the Fox
Project in southern Iowa during the forties and fifties.
121 Since this concept has influenced greatly the procedures
128 followed in my field work on Gullah, I will discuss in section
3.1 the major issues addressed by action anthropology
and their possible extension to action linguists. Section
3.2 will discuss the field worker's functions within the
community, and section 3.3 will describe the collection of
data.

## 3.1 Action Anthropology and Action Linguists

In an article devoted to the topic of action anthropology, Piddington (1960) distinguishes this kind of work from applied anthropology on the basis that application and pure research are not divorced from each other in action anthropology, as they often tend to be in applied anthropology. While applied anthropology is often oriented toward achieving certain preconceived goals within a community, action anthropology allows concrete plans for action to emerge from the ongoing processes of social action. In the optimum field work situation for action anthropology, the people themselves, rather than an administrator-anthropologist, decide what to do and carry out their decisions. A recurring theme in discussions of this kind of anthropological field work is the complementary nature of the goals of learning and doing. It is probably no accident that it was students from the University of Chicago's department of anthropology, where John Dewey was an influential figure at an early stage in the university's history, who first asked the questions which led to the development of this concept. Peattie (1960) specifically cites Dewey's Theory of Valuation in her discussion of the evolution of the Fox Project, as the field work among the Mesquakie Indians in Iowa came to be called.[1]

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[1] Much of the conceptual background for such an approach to the social sciences was laid by the work in philosophy of Dewey and his younger colleague at Chicago, George Herbert Mead. Active in the early settlement-house movement in

121 Tax's earlier description of the motivations behind the project (1958) shows how the students moved increasingly away from preconceived notions about concrete actions which would help the Indians solve specific problems, to a process of allowing actions to evolve from discussions and activities in which they and the Indians participated together. Within such an ongoing process, their learning about community values and structures was deepened, and the general approach proved both to enhance the research and to help the community.

Since my goal in the South Carolina study was the description and analysis of selected grammatical features undergoing change in the speech of the community, rather than an ethnographic study, I found it necessary to make modifications of the notions developed within action anthropology. While these modifications did not alter the larger goal of helping the community in the process of learning about its language, they did entail less mutual discussion and action with the community than did the original Fox Project. Be- 121
cause my time was limited to no more than six months in the 123
area, I relied on intensive observation of community behavior patterns, discussions with school officials, and knowledge

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Chicago and interested in social problems facing recent immigrants to the U.S., Mead engaged in community work during his teaching years at Chicago--work which almost surely contributed to his ideas on the relation between Self and Society. His ideas on language, similar to those of Wittgenstein and valuable to sociolinguists, are only now becoming publicized from the lecture notes of his students (Miller, 1973).

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121 of past community action projects to determine what my most
123 useful and acceptable function could be as a working participant in community life. It is my belief that my working in a highly visible capacity at jobs that made sense in terms of the particular community's values allowed me to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events during the short span of five months. It is true that speech directed to me often reflected the particular role I had assumed, but it is also the case that by having a valid reason for being among the people at a variety of times and places, I had the opportunity to observe a wide range of language activity in which I was not an active participant. I believe that these observations allow conclusions about the range of linguistic variation in the community to be made with a greater chance of validity than had I worked only with informants in the traditional manner or with select small groups in the manner of some recent sociolinguistic
121 investigations. It is my hope that a kind of action linguistics might be stimulated by the approach outlined here, which would add to the productive methods developed by sociolinguists like Labov, Stewart, Gumperz, and Hymes by fostering a more purposeful integration of the linguist into the community in some functional sense. It may be that such a community-based language experience will promote the kind of applied linguistics which Ferguson has called for over the years. (See Ferguson, 1975 for a summary of these

121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

123 Because the river island which was the focus of my
872 study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible
(126) was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

## CHAPTER 4

## LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

### 4.0 Overview

•121 The present chapter deals with three grammatical
categories chosen to represent the changes now underway in
193 Gullah. The syntactic functions of the three categories--
complementizer, preposition, and pronoun--are clearly distinct
from each other in this creole. The morphemes used
for the creole and standard forms within each category are
distinct phonetically from each other, for the most part.
Older Gullah texts indicate that variation has been present
within these categories for at least the past century; for
the complementizer, change to standard forms is almost complete
for most speakers in the area studied. For each category,
121 analysis of the systematic linguistic changes in
128 progress will be presented. Section 4.1 examines the pre-infinitival
complementizer, section 4.2 a static locative
preposition, and section 4.3 the third person singular pronouns.
Section 4.4 summarizes these findings.

### 121 4.1 Complementizer

193 A number of recent papers have presented evidence that many languages have morphemes which function both as

121 193 case markers and as complementizers (Ferguson, 1970; Moravcsik, 1972a and 1972b; Gorbet, 1973; R. Clark, 1973; Hinds, 1973; Joseph, 1975). Washabaugh (1975) has presented evidence for the existence of similar morphemes in a number of creoles. 121 128 193 In order to adequately explore these relationships between the complementizer and other syntactic categories in Gullah, section 4.1.1 will describe the uses of the morpheme fE for the grammatical categories of preposition, complementizer, and conditional marker. Section 4.1.2 will present an analysis of the functions of the pre-infinitival complementizer in Gullah, along with a discussion of the direction of change presently shown by this grammatical category. Section 4.1.3 will summarize historical developments in this category for English and will point to possible universal relationships which obtain between complementizers and case markers in creoles and in fully expanded languages.

### 193 4.1.1 Uses of fE in Gullah

The particle fE, phonetically [fə], is used as a complementizer in Gullah in pre-infinitival position. This morpheme is also used as a preposition and as a conditional marker on the verb. Examples of the three syntactic uses of the particle fE are given below:

**PREPOSITION**

Benefactive: (1) but yet I reckon they doing that fE the children wey go to school (S2)

'but yet I reckon they're doing that for the children who go to school'

000 complementizer. It is also easy to see that the subjectivity expressed by for is common to its irrealis mood-marking function as a "potential subjunctive," in Aijmer's terms.

• 121 193 I suggest an evolutionary sequence of [case marker > complementizer > conditional] for both standard English and Gullah, with Gullah showing an overt conditional modal and English only a 'potentially' subjunctive use of for. I suggest further that such a sequence may represent some universal process which can be expected in other developing creoles and which may be discovered historically for fully 000 expanded languages. Washabaugh (1975) presents a well-argued case for such a relationship between case marking and complementizing functions for the particle fi in Providence Island Creole (Colombia). He proposes that the evolution of a complementizer from a locative preposition reflects a universal process, and cites evidence of a similar development in Sranan, the creole of Senegal, Mauritius Creole, American Indian Pidgin English, and Hawaiian Creole. As discussed earlier, the prepositional use of fE cannot be considered locative. With the qualification that the proposition or case marker be considered 'locational' in the sense discussed by E. Clark (1970), I find Washabaugh's analysis a useful one for investigation of other creoles. In Tok Pisin of New Guinea, presently undergoing the transition from pidgin to a creole, Sankoff (personal communication) has found evidence for a complementizer function developing for a particle

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# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

● 121 The present chapter deals with the social factors of
197 sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation
of linguistic change for individual speakers. The
variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work
done for the study, on the basis that these social factors
have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage.
Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community,
was chosen as a third variable after some time in
the field. Observation of children's language use in the
[123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their
travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range
of language at their command was closely related to the extent
of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult
(124) speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic
mobility, after it became apparent that its effect
on language use could be even greater than that of economic
128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will
discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language
use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

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128 the mobility patterns of the two sexes in the mainland community and on the river island. Section 5.4 will discuss the relationship between these social factors and the linguistic variation described in Chapter 4. A final section will provide a conclusion and brief summary of the findings of this study.

### 5.1 Sex of Speaker and Language Use

●121 128 Because the existence of sex differences in language use has been one of the most thoroughly documented findings of sociolinguistic studies over the past two decades, a brief summary of these findings will be presented in 5.1.1. Data from the present study, which differ in important respects from data of earlier studies, will be presented in 5.1.2.

### 5.1.1 Previous Studies

121 When the present study was begun, it was expected that women would use more standard forms than men of comparable age and socio-economic status. For the island community, this generally proved to be the case. In the mainland community, however, women in the oldest age group used significantly more creole and nonstandard variants for the three grammatical categories analyzed than did men in their group. Previous studies have generally found that females use more standard forms in their speech than men of their age and social class. Fischer's study (1958) in a New England

121 village found girls to use more *ing*, rather than *in*, participle endings than boys. A verbal form like *walking*, for example, would be used more frequently by girls, while boys would use the lower-prestige form *walkin'* more often. In the larger and more diverse population of New York City, Labov (1966) found that women used fewer stigmatized forms in careful speech and showed sharper shifts from stigmatized forms to prestige forms when changing from casual to careful speech. In a Piedmont community of North Carolina, Levine and Crockett (1967) found equal use in reading style of the postvocalic *r*, a prestige form for that region, but women used the feature more frequently in a more formal word-list style. In Detroit, Shuy *et al.* (1968) found women to use the prestigious *-ing* ending more than twice as often as men in the general urban population, while Wolfram (1969) found for the black population that females within each social class used forms closer to standard norms than did males. Sankoff and Cedergren (1971) found women in Montréal, Canada, to use the liquid *l* characteristic of standard Canadian French more frequently than men generally, although younger professional women use it less than older women within their class. Trudgill (1972, 1974) found women of Norwich, England, using the standard *-ing* ending more frequently than men. In his study of phonological change in Eskilstuna, Sweden, Nordberg (1973) found young and middle-aged women leading the way in the transition from the older

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dialectal forms to prestigious standard forms. One study differed from this general finding that women use more standard or prestige forms. Fasold (1972) examined the black working population of Washington, D. C., and found either no difference between the sexes or slightly more use of standard forms by males. Most of the studies cited have considered the use of standard or prestigious forms by women to constitute 'conservative' linguistic behavior.

In other studies by Labov and his associates (see Labov, 1972; Labov, Yeager, and Steiner, 1972), women have been found to be in the forefront of linguistic changes, exhibiting 'innovative' behavior. In summarizing studies of sound changes underway in a variety of U. S. communities, Labov _et_ _al._ found women to be more advanced than men in the adoption of new forms. In the sound changes reported in Nordberg's study of a city near Stockholm (1973), women's faster adoption of standard forms over older dialectal froms also must be considered innovative behavior. Various explanations have been offered for this seemingly paradoxical behavior of women, as both conservators and innovators. Labov (1972: 304) has suggested that women, as part of the social role assigned to them, are allowed a wider expressive range than men. Trudgill (1972: 182-3) has observed that women in industrial societies may achieve social status more on the basis of their appearance than through their occupational activities, and may be more aware than men of the

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121 social significance of linguistic variables. Both Labov and Trudgill have observed that women exhibit patterns of 'linguistic insecurity.'

Three methodological problems characterize previous studies of sex differences in language use. First, the methods used to assign women to social classes are inadequate. Second, the sex of speaker as a variable is treated differently from study to study. Third, some studies have not taken into account the community norms for language use in labeling linguistic behavior 'conservative' or 'innovative.' Sociologists such as Watson and Barth (1964), and Acker (1973) more recently, maintain that no current model of social stratification permits accurate classification of women in modern societies. Two assumptions underlie all present methods of classification: occupation is the measure most heavily used as a major index of social class; the family is taken to be the primary social unit. Most of the sociolinguistic studies cited above have used the occupation of the head of a household as a major index of an entire family's social class. Unmarried women and widows have received different assignments in different studies. Some have assigned widows to the social class of their dead husbands. Single women have been treated in three different ways: assigned to their own typically low-status occupations and the corresponding social class; given their father's social class; or, as in Levine and Crockett's North

121 Carolina study, systematically eliminated from the study. Married women have been assigned to their husband's social class, even though little or no evidence exists to support the general assumption that married people belong to the same social class just because they live together. Hacker, in an early critique of the status of women (1951), observes that marriage may not represent the point of minimum social distance, but that inequalities of status may actually be preserved in marriage. She says, ". . . a dominant group member may be willing to marry a member of a group which, in general, he would not wish admitted to his social club" (64). No sociolinguistic research has dealt overtly with this issue. On the matter of the way in which sex is treated as a variable in these linguistic studies, most studies have not taken care to match speakers for age and sex, as well as for social class. While Labov has been in the forefront of recognizing the importance of sex differences as a factor in linguistic change, his New York study included far more women than men overall. He himself notes that the different proportions of men for his lowest and highest social classes pose problems in interpretation of the data (1966: 310). Fasold also has a disproportion of one sex in some age groups for his Washington study, and reports difficulties in drawing valid conclusions about sex differences in language use. Trudgill uses equal numbers of male and female speakers for his Norwich, England, study, but does not give figures on

•121 their distribution by social class. The studies of both Fischer in New England and Sankoff and Cedergren in Canada are exceptions to the general failure to match speakers for sex and age within social groups. A final methodological problem has been the general lack of discussion about community norms for language use. Labov has been an exception on this point, taking care to establish from his data the norms for a social group. But little discussion has been devoted to the problem of comparing linguistic behavior from group to group for the two sexes. Use of a given feature may represent conservative linguistic behavior within one social group and innovative behavior within another. To take only the obvious example, use of the -ing participle ending means preservation of an older prestige form for a white middle class group, but introduction of a new form for a black working class group. Fasold found slight evidence that females use more stigmatized forms, such as distributive be, in the black working class population of Washington; such behavior probably represents conservative linguistic behavior in terms of the community norms, rather than the innovative behavior which he suggests (1972: 216-7). In the black rural communities studied here, women of one community were found to be linguistically conservative, while women in the other showed innovative behavior. An appreciation of the differences between these communities is essential for the discussion which follows; discussion of these

121 differences is included in the sections on age and mobility, as well as in the section which follows.

### 5.1.2 Sex Differences in the Mainland and Island Communities

In the present study, the two communities identified in Chapter 2 loosely constitute two social classes, in the region under study. The existence of these groups was determined by becoming a participant in the social life of the larger community of rural Georgetown County, in the manner described in Chapter 2. From the river island community, which was the primary focus of this study, two women and two men were selected from three age groups and the speech used by them in unstructured conversation was compared for the use of three linguistic variables. The age groups selected were determined to be natural groupings for the communities studied, and will be discussed in 5.2. From the mainland community, two men and two women in the oldest age group were compared for the use of the same variables.
121 The percentages of creole and nonstandard variants used by
193 these selected speakers for a static-locative preposition, the pre-infinitival complementizer, and the third person singular pronouns are given in Table 6 below, ordered according to the rate at which these variables are changing toward the standard forms. Validity for the findings presented here is not claimed solely on the basis of the small sample of sixteen speakers, but on the combination of this

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 121]

121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close
family relationships which obtain between several of the
speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show strik-
ing differences in language use.

121 In the mainland community, older men use more
standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
562 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
193 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington,
184 D. C. For the island community, women generally use more
standard forms than men in all three age groups, although
speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference
in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this
group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145
possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The
heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in
the island community.

121 I suggest that sex differences in language used by
the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
562 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
463 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
193 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only
184 indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very
recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those
of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-
economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
● [121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor,
but casual observation and conversation with young people
gave some indication of its importance. In general, young
males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than
young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that
a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland,
saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All
girls and women who expressed an opinion about it univers-
ally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry
would bring. In one large family which had eleven children
ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother
and father had a long-standing argument about the value of
island life. The mother preferred the convenience of main-
land living, while the father maintained that they could
"have more" on the island, in terms of land and material
goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his
twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

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121 561 193 (184) factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker. In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are married to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while the husband uses some for two grammatical categories. Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

562 193 561 There is some indication that sex differences in the use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be compared
561 with the data from the longer adult conversations, but
they give some indication that sex differences in language use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better in school than mainland boys in their group, but their language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar. These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' discussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972) operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the two social groups under discussion here, however, the pattern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in the island community.

•121

### 5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropologist who has studied language and social relationships in a black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

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167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat- [197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

## 5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

● 121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

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121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178
184 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resistant to change, according to sex, age, and community membership. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms, while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the island community who have available to them, through occupational roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to participate in a variety of speech events in which standard English is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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•121 I. Island women: young and middle aged

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19
184 II. Island men: middle aged
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562

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as pre-
121 vious studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted,
19 we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process
178 of language change. One group of women is strongly resist-
562 ant to change, while another group is leading the community
movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

121 perspective as a participant in community life, however, the
19 178 life experiences of these groups of women have been different
562 from each other and from those of men in their groups. Recent
anthropological analyses have pointed out that men and
121 women universally occupy different positions within their
562 cultural and social groups (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974;
Keenan, 1974). In these analyses, women are seen as outside
the male-oriented norms of their social groups. Linguists
have long understood that the interaction of language and
social life has important consequences for linguistic behavior
(see especially Ferguson, 1959 and Hymes, 1967, 1973).
121 If the two sexes have differentiated social roles within all
562 societies, we must expect certain linguistic consequences
19 to follow from the different life experiences of the two
sexes. Men and women will speak differently from each other
in every social group, but the ways and extent to which they
differ can be expected to vary from social group to social
group. Hymes (1973) has observed that inequality among
speakers arises because some speakers participate in social
situations not available to other speakers. To resolve the
paradox of linguistically conservative and innovative women,
the social situations open to women in their respective
groups must be carefully examined. Focusing on women as
members of social groups, we should not be surprised to find
them represented at the extremes of linguistic conservatism
or innovation, depending on the speech situations open to
them as active participants in communal life.

000 them as active participants in communal life.

## 5.5 Conclusion

121 178 193 Language does not change in a vacuum. It changes as part of the life experiences of people who use it. Because language is inherently a shared process, those who use it share in determining the direction of change. The analysis of the linguistic variables presented here has shown that the direction of change in Gullah is all in the direction of the standard variety of English. Within each category, speakers show systematic variation which indicates that the meanings or uses most basic to the original creole variables are last to change toward the standard. The variant *fE* as pre-infinitival complementizer is retained longest for the introduction of purposive clauses. The pronoun *ee* is retained longest to distinguish neuter subject from neuter object *Em*, a distinction not made by standard *it*. The static-locative preposition *to* is retained for indications of spatial notions, while standard *at* is introduced for expression of temporal and figurative notions never expressed by the creole *to*. Although individual speakers show shared patterns of variation in their movement toward the standard, they make separate choices about the speed with which they move toward it. [562] Young and middle aged women in one community find it advantageous, probably for job-related reasons, to move faster toward the standard than any other segment of their speech

121 178 193 562 community. Older women in another community choose to resist change toward the standard longest of any speakers in the study. The social factors of sex, age, community membership, and geographic mobility have been shown to influence the activation of change. Sex is indicated as the most influential of these social factors, but its effect is different in the two social groups examined here.

121 178 193 The pattern of change exhibited in Gullah does not parallel that reflected in the history of English. For standard English, *to* is the original pre-infinitival complementizing particle and retains this function today. Originally introducing infinitival forms in variation with infinitival verb endings, *to* later shared this function with other particles such as *at*, *til*, and *for*. Although some of these forms are retained today in certain dialects of English, *to* has never lost its original complementizing function in the standard dialect. The status of *for* in this grammatical category for standard English is presently the subject of debate by synchronic and historical linguists; in some analyses it has become a complementizer in the base structure, while in other analyses it has retained its prepositional status throughout the history of English. By way of contrast, the particle *fE* in Gullah was the original complementizing particle, now being replaced by standard *to*. In the English pronominal system, the singular personal pronouns were marked for gender throughout the history of

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121 English; the animate pronouns were marked for case as well.
178 The original Gullah personal pronouns, *ee* and *Em*, are marked
193 for case but not for gender. As Gullah changes toward the standard, these pronouns are acquiring distinctions for gender, but the genderless form *ee* is retained longest where it marks an original case distinction for inanimates which English does not make. The preposition *to* was used to mark static location in some earlier dialects of English, as well as dynamic movement, and is still found in some nonstandard dialects today. In its use as a static-locative preposition in Gullah, *to* holds the strongest claim for origin as a dialectal variant of English. The pattern of expansion for this grammatical category in Gullah, however, is similar to that for English-related creoles in the Caribbean and argues for a development characteristic of an expanding creole rather than of a dialect of English.

The basic Gullah variants used for the pronominal
121 and prepositional categories discussed here suggest that the
193 Caribbean creoles and Gullah may have had different histories in important respects. For Gullah, the basic distinction in the personal pronoun system is between the syntactic functions of object and non-object. For the English-related creoles of Jamaican and Guyanese, the basic distinction seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. In the Gullah prepositional category, *to* is the variant used for basic locative relationships, while *at* and *by* are used

121 193 in the Caribbean for the same semantic domain. These differences in forms used for fundamental grammatical categories suggest that further inquiry into the origins, as well as comparative studies, of all these English-related creoles might lead to further insights about the common patterns of development for expanding languages.

121 178 193 For the analysis of change in Gullah, aspects of both the dynamic model and the quantitative paradigm have been used and both have led to insights about underlying processes. For a complicated grammatical category like the personal pronoun system, the implicational scale utilized in the dynamic model has shown relationships and directions of change not readily perceived through simple frequency counts of variants used by each speaker. For greater faithfulness to the data, however, and for a clearer picture of the patterns of change than simple 'presence or absence' of creole variants would give, some indication of 'more or less' relationships between variants has been included. For showing important relationships between social factors and the activation of linguistic change, quantitative data on individual speakers, whose social characteristics were well established and readily compared with those of other speakers, have been essential. Both models are inadequate at those points where they insist upon categorical divisions rather than allowing for descriptions of continuous, systematic processes. To accurately and fully reflect the findings of the present

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● 121 study, the dynamic paradigm must allow for systematic individual variation in parts of the grammar undergoing change.
178
193 The quantitative paradigm must allow for more communal variation than is usually considered to exist within the boundaries of a single speech community. Both these models have moved us closer to a conceptualization of language as a process experienced by those who speak it.

000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

•121 464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

464 162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

434 While the median annual income of rural families was
$6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the
poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was
$2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under
434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median
592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had
464

## CHAPTER II

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

•121 Discipline is one means the parent has of guiding the socialization of its young. Parental discipline behavior ranges from verbal persuasion to the use of force. Differences of mode, in technique, and attitude toward discipline have been noted across class and cultures. Perhaps no two parents discipline their children in exactly the same way. Likewise children react and are affected differently as the methods, beliefs, and situations differ. The behavioral scientist tries to determine and measure whether there is discernible patterning to the differences.

Discipline behavior is but part of the overall pattern of interactions occurring within the family environment. While it is difficult, study of the total environment in which discipline behavior occurs provides the more valid indication of the affects of particular features on discipline interactions.

Roy's[3] investigation raises the question of whether differences in discipline behavior is more related to

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[3] Katherine Roy, "Parental Attitudes Toward Their Children," Journal, Home Economics, XLII (1950), 652-653.

•121 environmental or to cognitive variables? The literature strongly suggests the cognitive relationship. Subsequently the impetus has been on study of the effects of permissive discipline on later cognitive growth, i.e., intelligence, educational attainment, language style, etc.. In this preoccupation, the other side of the coin--the effects of the environment--have been relatively neglected.

Roy found that as the number of rooms in the household increases, parents reported less use of physical punishment. Likewise as the parents' perception of safety in the community increased physical punishment decreased. Positive relationships were reported for number of children in family, age of parent and child, and the use of physical punishment. Her comparison between sex and the use of discipline aggression showed that females maintained the more consistent pattern. The affective potential of environment was clearly shown.

This section can be concluded by returning to the Roy investigation. If the direction and concerns of the subsequent research is a measure, the implication of Roy's study has not been followed up. Her report stands as a warning that the cognition related superiority found for children reared in middle class situations, may be more a function of environment than of the language enrichment the parent offers. The lack of systematic knowledge in this area is multiplied when the discipline practices of Black parents are considered.

Differences in cultural reference, experiences and economic disposition act as antecedents of parental discipline behavior. A fundamental concern of those engaged in comparative discipline research has been in controlling the differences in cultural reference and economic status among Black families. The inability to control these factors, particularly that of cultural history is a glaring limitation of much of the comparative discipline research.

For example the commonly reported positive relationship between class and use of physical discipline does not appear to be the pattern for Black parents.[4] In contrast, the reported tendency is for Black parents to use physical discipline across class lines.[5] Billingsley reiterates the conceptualization of a sliding class scale to account for the above tendency.[6] He maintains that because Black parents tend to cluster at the bottom of class ranges, they retain more of the behaviors and attitudes of parents in the lower adjacent class category.

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[4] Franklin E. Frazier, The Negro in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), pp. 3-21.

[5] C. K. Kamii and N. L. Rabin, "Class Differences in the Socialization Practices of Negro Mothers," Journal of Marriage and Family, XXIX (1967), 302-310.

[6] Andrew Billingsley, Black Family in White America (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).

• 121 However, differences in the obstacles to social mobility encountered by Black and White parents may also underly the cross-class use of physical discipline by Black parents. Similarly the influence of an urban versus a rural cultural experience as an affective force on the discipline habits of Black parents must also be considered. Concurrently, what changes in the discipline habits of Black parents occur as a consequence of family migration from rural to urban environment?

Herskovits[7] in explanation of the physical disciplining habits of Black parents offers a historial base for this behavior trait. He suggests that beating, yelling, shouting and whipping are forms of discipline used throughout West African societies. Furthermore, he proposes the retention of similar discipline practices among Blacks in the United States.

The problems of controlling the antecedent factors which influence discipline behavior is no doubt difficult. This difficulty is particularly highlighted among Black parents. Perhaps the single most difficult element to control is that of the cultural cohesiveness and life experience of Black parents. Nowhere in the United States is there more uniformity in life experience and cultural

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[7] Melvelle Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past* (Chicago, 1941).

● 121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

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197 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the

[576]
[197] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

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[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gulliah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

121 become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of
197 early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The
[576] conflicting feature of these two notions is evident.
[177] Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative
to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is
highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West
Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.
121 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable
197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent
with the research which places West Africa as the origin of
174 the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as
illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
  (Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela-
174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands
178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to
the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits
suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, *Africanism in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, *The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution*, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
174 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections,
that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

## THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted
in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

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[13] Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

121 114 178 behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated and where there was sufficient common understanding among them to give significance to African survivals."[14]

In contrast to Frazier's assertion of the complete destruction of the African family organization among American blacks. Dubois[15] believed that careful research would reveal traces. While many aspects of the Sea Island experience have been studied, systematic investigations of the African family organization as proposed by Dubois has not been attempted among Sea Islanders. In this regard, Turner warns that Sea Islanders often exhibit African behavioral features only among the intimate circles of the family. However, if the essential role of the family in cultural transmission is understood, then systematic information on Sea Island child rearing may provide clues on the extent of the survival of African elements among Island families. Furthermore, such an investigation may provide a retrospective glimpse at the processes of de-Africanization of the American black family.

121 178 Parson's collection of Sea Island folklore identifies attitudinal patterns and beliefs which are clearly of West

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[14] *Ibid*.

[15] W. E. B. Dubois, *The Negro Family* (Atlanta: University Press, 1908), p. 21.

121 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
178 have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which
are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
177 Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
178 open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated
the American ethos to the extent evident among
northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a
cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that
the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside
of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly
suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland
(U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more
U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their
African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting
cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes
inceasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective
insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

12 The related and important question of the present investigation
178 is whether in addition to the retention of
linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," *African Language Society* (1966), pp. 171-179.

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(764)
(845)
(553)

> Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.
>
> Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.
>
> Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with
the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe
and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders
act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged
with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White-man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often
made the elder councils of each island the primary legal
body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the
islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few
clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes
toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

121 855 178 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their West African heritage and strive to rear their children in an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 121 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folklore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick [621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 621 861 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island communities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of child rearing within a West African heritage. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

121 African and the child rearing practices of Black American
parents a clear conception of Sea Island child rearing beliefs and practices may be an essential prerequisite.
Until this prerequisite research is completed, projected
relationships between Sea Island and West African child
rearing must be viewed as merely conjecture. The intent
of this investigation is to outline the child rearing discipline habits of Sea Islanders.

THE SEA ISLAND FAMILY

121 Because of their lower socio-economic status the use
861 of physical punishment manifested in parental discipline
may be commonly reported by Sea Island parents. However
the factors of isolation and clearly defined social patterns may negate that of socio-economic status, and have
the effect of diminishing the use of physical punishment.
Or these factors may have the opposite influence of increasing the use of physical punishment.

121 The relatively small living space of Sea Island households coupled with a high proportion of extended family
592 situations could produce a high use of physical punishment
861 in discipline. Similarly the low educational attainment
levels and occupational status would suggest high use of
physical punishment among Sea Island parents. That whipping
121 as a form of discipline commonly found among West African
178 peoples would be also common to Sea Island parents is
861

● 121 178 861 consistent with the postulation that Gullahs have maintained West African cultural traits.

121 861 At present the extent to which these relationships will hold for Sea Island parents can only be postulated. There exists in the literature few clear statements describing the rearing practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks. Neither is it clear how these rearing practices and attitudes have been formed or modified as a consequence of time, isolation, and/or as a result of the American experience. Likewise the extents to which the discipline practices and beliefs of Sea Islanders is commonly held across generations can only be postulated. It is not clear whether younger islanders hold attitudes toward discipline which mirror the views of older islanders, or if there is a trend toward more attunement to the rearing practices and discipline methods commonly found among urbanized youths. Neither is the literature clear on the discipline attitudes and practices of island parents in comparison to their elders. The intent of the present investigation is to provide some indication of the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks, and to provide a historical perspective of those practices and beliefs and to thereby tentatively assess the extent and direction of change.

121 PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

This research investigation has four primary aims:

121 1. To identify the parental discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Sea Islanders.

2. To compare the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Islanders across three generations.

3. To identify the parameters of asocial behavior and their disciplinary consequences among Sea Islanders.

4. To gage the influence of isolation (measured by distance from the mainland) on the discipline habits and attitudes of Gullah Islanders.

One goal of the study is to clearly identify the discipline habits of Gullah parents. Secondly, the comparative emphasis is aimed at measuring the direction and extent of change in discipline habits and beliefs across three generations. Finally, the intent to gage the affective influence of isolation on the discipline habits and views of Gullah Islanders.

## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

•121 In order to generate the information outlined under the study purposes, Sea Island family units were the most appropriate source of data. With the same aim, these family units were identified in each of the five Sea Islands communities. The cross-generational interest of the study was satisfied by the membership of each family unit.

**STUDY DEFINITIONS**

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592 Family Unit.--The family unit consisted of six members. A unit contained three groups with two (sex-paired)* members in each group. The three groups of a family unit were: (1) grandparents, (2) parents and (3) children. Group I members were grandparents, either of maternal or paternal linkage. Group II members were parents and siblings of group I members. Group III members were children. Group III members were either adopted, step and/or the own children of group II members.

Family Unit Structure.--Unless conceptualized in exaggerated forms, the comparison of the structural resemblance

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*There were more female members in group I. The ratio was nineteen females and nine males.

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of the Sea Island family unit to traditional concepts of the extended family would be erroneous. The extended design on the islands is the family gap. Within this gap elder or grandparents either share or maintain a separate dwelling. The family gap living situation is the most prevalent family structure on the Sea Islands. In this structure whether or not grandparents maintain separate or shared living quarters has little to no effect on their roles and functions; therefore, the extended versus nuclear family design was irrelevant and was not used.

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STUDY SAMPLE

Sample Source.--Family units resided on the five Sea Islands of Charleston County, South Carolina. These islands, listed sequentially in terms of distance from Charleston City, were James, Johns, Yonges, Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands.

Sample Size.--The sample size consisted of fourteen family units; six members were in each unit. The total size of the sample was eighty-four respondents.

Same Conditions.--Four family units were from James and four were from Edisto Islands. Two family units each were from Johns, Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. There were a total of twenty-eight members in each generational group. There were forty-seven females and thirty-seven males.

PROCEDURES

121 124 The initial task was to compile listings of the Black families on each island. This task was accomplished by interviewing residents of each island. The postal workers among those interviewed were knowledgeable of the names and addresses of the islands' Black families. Black school teachers who live and work on the islands were helpful in estimating the number and ages of children in the families. Elder Black islanders were helpful and very adept at outlining the kinship trees and in detailing the composition of the families. When a list for each island containing the names of at least twenty families had been compiled, the first task was considered complete. Based upon the available information on family composition, only families which met the study's definition of a family unit were included on the five lists.

124 The second task was to authenticate the composition of the listed families and then to elicit the participation of family units meeting the study definition. Each family named on the lists was coded with randomly assigned three digit numbers. Then slips of paper containing these three digit numbers were produced for each listed family. By island of residence, these numbered slips were dropped into one of five shoe boxes. Each shoe box was labelled to represent one island. All the boxes had covers. The covers

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V Island by sex by questions one thru thirteen.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

I a) $H_o: M_1 = M_2$
Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o: M_1 \neq M_2$

II a) $H_o: M_1 = M_2$
There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o: M_1 \neq M_2$

III a) $H_o: M_1 = M_2$
Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_3: M_1 \neq M_2$

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DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

The research is not clear on how discipline is applied in extended family situations. In households in which grandparents are present there is more opportunity for value transmission. One result may be less variation in discipline behavior across generations. The extended family structure no doubt adds to the chance for value conflicts to occur. However, the high cultural status accorded Sea Island elders may tend to negate the chance for the occurrence of value conflicts. It is also likely that younger Sea Islanders whose values conflict with their parents may

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly
those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are
generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than
603 paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the
household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socioeconomic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of *the discipline philosophy of two for one*. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, *The Role of the Father in the Family*, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

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887 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians. Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining pattern. (888) Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This (178) possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

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861 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

## CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based
resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973
101 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is
located further off shore and is less urbanized than many
of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also
conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of
noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth
century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast
and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication
was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

197 ment for a creole language to survive.
177 Today, the language situation on the islands is
complex. The communities are changing under the influx
of commercialization, inter-island communication and im-
proved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated,
[191] many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both
productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of
178 speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure
592 of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder
855 member is usually the established household spokesman,
887 and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As
197 expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language
(197) of the younger generations. While many do not purport to
actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it
in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal
attacks).

### 1.0. Focus of this study

•121
197 The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea
Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp
(1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities
(i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of
merging with the standard language). There is a correspon-
dence between the dominant official language and the
creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

rigid social stratification brought on by educational programs and other accculturative forces to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of creole speakers to modify their speech in the direction of the standard.

The dynamics involved in this modification process have received little attention from either scholars in creole studies or variation theorists. DeCamp begins this investigation by proposing four alternative stages in the life cycle of a creole language: (1) continuation without change, (2) evolution into a 'normal' language, (3) merger with the superstrate, and (4) extinction. Nichols modifies two of these stages, suggesting instead of 'continuing without change', 'continuing without significant change' because all languages used by living speakers change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language' she recommends 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' because creoles ARE already normal languages, though given the relevant social circumstances they may become extinct at any point (Nichols 1976:4)

Extinction is an obscure term for languages. It can mean that the creole has no living speakers or that it is no longer considered a separate language. Of the four alternatives, DeCamp (1971:17) says that 'Gullah, once widely spoken in Georgia, South Carolina, and the nearby Sea Islands, is now nearly extinct on the mainland and becoming rare on the islands...' Yet he offers no evidence

121 to support his claim. Rickford's analysis of the language
197 situation on the Sea Islands is less dramatic than DeCamp's, though similarly pessimistic about the vitality of Gullah as a distinct variety:

> What is most widely spoken on the Sea Islands today is best described as a 'decreolized' or mesolectal variety of Gullah. In fact, I would prefer to abandon the term 'Gullah' entirely because its associations with some purely basilectal variety are already too firmly entrenched. (Rickford 1974:94)

Impressionistic statements of this kind are often misleading or incorrect, and DeCamp and Rickford suggest that Gullah has drifted farther along the post-creole continuum than this study shows. The only safe method of determining linguistic change in Gullah is to count features and their variants. A computation will help to determine the degree, if any, to which present day Gullah is evolving from the creole pattern described by Turner in 1949. This dissertation addresses itself to a quantitative investigation of evolutionary patterns of retention and movement in Gullah and to a demonstration of the dynamics involved in this variation and movement process.

The measurement of fluctuation between features necessarily involves counting. Therefore it is important to choose variables suitable for quantitative analysis. In selecting linguistic variables, I chose ones which met the principal criteria that Labov (1964:166) outlines for quantitative sociolinguistic investigations. These criteria are as follows:

1. The variable should be high in frequency.

121 197 2. The variable should have a certain immunity from conscious suppression.
3. The variable should be an integral unit of a larger structure.
4. The variable should be easily quantified on a linear scale.

121 197 193 My aim is to investigate features that the discipline accepts as characteristic of creole language, and then to contrast frequency counts of these features with those of English. The features selected for this investigation are the preverbal markers and the unmarked third person pronominal forms. These are grammatical categories that will likely appear in any consultant's speech without suppression and with a certain regularity of frequency if they are a part of the speaker's natural grammar, and if the speaker speaks long enough. These variables are an integral part of the grammar of Gullah, and they are easily quantifiable. In addition, Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of these categories for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The investigation of these specific categories will help to determine the degree to which Gullah remains distinct or is evolving toward English. Bailey (1966:146) distinguishes the Creole system from the English system through the use of preverbs and third person pronouns in the following manner:

1. The tense system of the Creole is limited to the unmarked verb for general purposes, and a particle specifying 'past'; English has a more elaborate tense system.

2. There is no subject-verb concord in the Creole; the

•121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.

197 3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person
193 pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

## 1.1. Studies of Gullah

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197 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguis-
114 tically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

121 In 1949, Turner settled the controversy of African
197 influence with the publication of *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. To date, his work remains the most authoritative source on Gullah. His aim was not to prove that this language had no remnants of British English, but to prove that African elements also existed in and interfered with the linguistic system to such an extent that the language was creolized.[1]

## 1.2. Problems in Creole Studies

Creolists no longer attempt to argue for ONLY European or ONLY African ancestry for Gullah and other Atlantic creoles. They now concern themselves with the genetic classification of the elements of these languages. But they do not agree on any typological criterion which defines the various mixtures resulting from the merger of genetically unrelated languages. Schuchardt, an early scholar in the area of creole studies, referred to a language resulting from such unions as a 'Mischsprache', a language composed of elements derived from both parent languages but possessing the genetic classification of neither.

121 The Atlantic creoles could be classified as branches of Indo-European language families, or branches of Niger-Congo language families. The French creoles, for example, could be added as a branch of the North Gallo-Romance

families, or to the Kwa language families (Hymes 1971:4). The problem is not that linguists would deny that creoles ARE genetically related to their parent languages. The problem is determining HOW and to what extent they are related.

The classification of creole languages is further obscured by varying methods of evaluating systematic correspondences. It is difficult to assess which resemblances are basic and how vocabulary is to be weighed in relation to grammatical pattern. The vocabulary is generally borrowed from the superstratum while the grammatical pattern is formed from the substratum (Hymes 1959: 58). Another problem in typological classification is that creolists have not defined linguistic features which exclusively characterize the structure of creoles. For example, reduced inflections and borrowed vocabulary are often regarded as structural features of creoles, but Givón argues that two important facts have been overlooked in the discussion of these and other features.

> 1. The S[ubstrate]-language in most creoles discussed in the literature was a non-inflected language to begin with, either West African (which, according to Valkhof (1966) formed the initial substratum for all the Caribbean creoles) or South East Asian;
> 2. The L[exifier]-language in all these cases was a highly inflected European language, such as English (Krio, Jamaican Creole), French (Haitian) or Spanish (Papiamento). (Givón 1973:21)

Morphologically, the evidence is that a creole will follow the structure of the substrate and not that of the superstrate. No evidence shows that creoles are characterized by lack of inflections or that creolization involves the reduction of inflections. Givón goes on to say that

121 inflected languages tend to lose their inflections in time before developing new ones, and that languages which borrow in great quantity from the lexicon of another often erode the borrowed inflection without becoming a creole (Givón 1973:21). An example of this erosion process is seen in the change from old to modern English, though what caused the inflections to vanish is unclear. It may be argued that inflections are useful for helping to minimize errors in comprehension. Yet Chinese gets along well without them. Inflections seemingly complicate the grammar and make languages more difficult to learn. Yet all children learn language at about the same rate regardless of structure. Consequently, language effectiveness cannot be measured by morphology alone.

A second feature attributed to creole languages is borrowed vocabulary. It is in this area that all languages tend to borrow most extensively. While they do borrow lexicon, Givón (1973:26-7) enumerates some reasons why languages seldom borrow grammar:

> 1. The most idiosyncratic and unsystematic feature of human languages is the pairing of actual sound sequences to actual meanings in the lexicon. This is, happily, the most arbitrary thing about language and thus also the area where languages diverge the most.
> 2. It is only natural that when different linguistic groups come in contact, the area of most acute linguistic conflict is the lexicon. Thus given no universality in this area of total arbitrariness, this is also the area where languages are likely to borrow most from each other—in order to resolve the conflict.

[197] Some dialectologists classify Gullah as a dialect of English rather than as a creole language because its lexicon

●121 is predominantly English. As exemplified in the previous
197 discussion, lexicon alone does not constitute a dialect of a language. A dialect of English is a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. In the United States dialectal variations present virtually no comprehension barrier to other speakers of American English outside of a particular region. Gullah does lack the structural intercomprehensibility afforded by dialects of American English, and consequently it can not be properly defined within the boundaries of the English language in the same manner as many English dialects.

121 Creole languages are no longer regarded as 'bastard' dialects disowned and held in low repute by linguists. Rather, they are now studied as independent language systems with inherent peculiarities resulting from their own course of development. Creoles studied in this manner allow linguists not only to examine subtleties in phonological, syntactical and morphological elements as they contrast with their superstrate and substrate sources, but also to make judgments about creole systems as they compare and relate to each other.

12 The massive studies undertaken recently on languages throughout the world have revealed striking similarities among pidgin and creole languages which could not have had any prior genetic affiliation. For example, both Atlantic and Pacific creoles have a number of reduplicated

12 phrase or initiates a negative imperative sentence.

| *English* | *Freetown Krio* | *Ewondo Populaire* |
|---|---|---|
| I do | a du | me bo |
| I don't do | a nɔ du | me ke bo |
| do | du | boo |
| don't do | nɔ du | ke boo |
| I did | a bin du | me nga bo |
| I didn't do | a nɔ bin du | me ke nga bo |

*Comparison of verb phrases (Todd 1974:41)*

•121 The polygenetic theory attempts to explain similarities among creoles through a spontaneous generation process where creoles are thought to have developed independently with influences from their parent languages. Some
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114 polygenesis proponents such as Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1966) suggested that pidgins and creoles resulted from 'baby talk' used by overseers to communicate with their servants. Consequently, the language which developed was simplified in grammatical and phonological structure. This theory is unsatisfactory for several reasons. (1) Early accounts indicate that the European overseers and their families were learning the creole from the servants and not vice versa (Dillard 1972:192); (2) if the European had improvised his own unique variety of baby talk to communicate with his servants, one would not be able to account for the fact that all French creoles are mutually intelligible and (3) the structural similarities shared by the Atlantic creoles of Spanish, French and English are too numerous for pure coincidence (DeCamp 1971:19).

121 Proponents of another polygenetic theory seek to explain similarities among creoles through contact language processes where a creole results from mixtures of European and West African languages. DeCamp summarizes some basic problems with this theory:

> If we assume that the language-mixing process was eclectic, taking one feature from this African language, another from that one, we are still unable to explain the similarities between all Caribbean creoles and the remarkable uniformity of French-based creoles. That each group would just happen to choose the same features from Twi, the same from Hausa, etc., would stretch coincidence too far...as LaPage pointed out...many of the common features of Caribbean and African creoles are also shared by other creoles such as Pitcairnese, where there have been no African influences...
> (DeCamp 1971:20)

The most recent theory of linguistic universals is perhaps the most comprehensive. It accounts for similarities among creoles through the process of natural language acquisition. It is assumed that there are elements which are natural to the actual language learning process, and creole languages bring us closer to what that common linguistic process is than so-called 'natural languages', which are assumed to already have prescribed levels of grammatical markedness (Kay & Sankoff 1974:73-84 passim).

From the standpoint of universals in communication, Cassidy (1971:213-15) points to certain perceptual strategies as primary: (1) establishment of group identity (inside group vs. outside group); (2) establishing forms for differentiation between statements, questions, commands, and requests, and (3) naming objects and basic concepts like time, food, clothing, people and body parts. As the pidgin matures, it begins the process of refinement or elaboration and distinctions, referring to quality, condition, plurality, manner, aspect and modalities, appear. Since pidgin and creole languages are generally uncomplicated by elaborate systems of markedness, they are thought to be closer to the universal base of natural language learning than languages which are highly marked. Proponents of this theory (Cassidy 1971, Givón 1973, Kay & Sankoff 1974) believe that human beings are biologically programmed to acquire language. Givón (1973:3) likens the process of pidginization and creolization to child language acquisition:

> At the start he [the child] presumably has in his mind only what Chomsky terms "Universal Grammar" or the human faculty of language acquisition. This initial grammar of the newborn child is, presumably, sufficiently specific in all areas of the grammar. Whatever the ultimate nature of the specifications, the child's grammar at the outset is highly unmarked.

If humans have an innate biological propensity to acquire language, one can assume that there are also linguistic universals common to all languages, and speakers of pidgins and creoles by nature of their contact situation must rely on this universal process for communication. Yet persuasive as it seems, the theory of universals is vague. Pidgin and creole languages have not been adequately studied long enough to be able to define exactly what universals are involved in language learning and what their relationship to creoles is.

Another development in creole studies and more pertinent to this study is the area of variation theory. With

● 121 the expansion of the field of linguistics to include the study of pidgins and creoles where variation is the rule and uniformity is the exception, creolists now have reasons for a different philosophical orientation, one incorporating rules variable enough to encompass descriptions of the acrolect, basilect and the intermediate varieties as well.

The search for this philosophical model led to two approaches to variation. The proponents of the first (Labov 1966, Shuy et al. 1969, Sankoff & Cedergren 1972) maintain that all members of a speech community share an isomorphic grammar, but systematic individual variation exists in the performance of each member. This variation is described through an elaborate system of variable rules, with some indeterminacy to acknowledge the concept of free variation.

DeCamp(1971) criticizes this theory, pointing out that switching phenomena and other deviations are described empirically without incorporating them into the theory. He says this approach to variation is analogous to Trager and Smith's 'common core' approach to English phonology where all variants are lumped into an undifferentiated mass. He says attempts to describe variation based on Trager and Smith's system or Weinreich's 'diasystem' are simple superimpositions of two or more separate systems which obscure the peculiarities of the individual system without actually giving us any information about the language itself. Arbitrary juxtapositions of separate

121 descriptions, DeCamp explains, are only elaborate systems of notations conveying the same information as one might find in 'a whole shelf of separate grammars.' None of these theories enables one to describe the correspondence between analogous features in different dialects. None of them enables one to 'convert sentences from one dialect into equivalent sentences in another', and this, DeCamp claims, is the purpose of describing dialect variations in the first place (DeCamp 1971:352).

Proponents of the second approach claim that multilingual communities result from where the creole and the superstrate are no longer discrete systems. (For Jamaica see DeCamp 1971:354, Bailey 1971:348, Cassidy 1971:204; for Hawaii see Reinecke and Tokimasa 1934, Tsuzaki 1971; for Guyana see Bickerton 1973). They claim that speech heterogeneity is due to the mutual interference of one, two or perhaps several grammars within a single speech community. They claim also that these dialects may be described on a grid with each gradation corresponding to the grammar of a particular dialect. While all variation theorists have been concerned with establishing systems for linguistic varieties, each adopts a different descriptive method.

Beryl Bailey (1971:341), for example, makes no claim for a linguistic continuum. She devises a technique based on an idealized construct of a true creole and Standard Jamaican English. She analyses various texts and plots their distance from a hypothetical base by determining the ratio of

12 rules necessary to convert texts to Standard Jamaican English or Jamaican Creole respectively. She assumes that varieties of speech are produced by mutual interference of two discrete grammars. Bickerton (1973) argues that if we accept Bailey's theory, principled descriptions of these speech varieties would be literally impossible because the system she proposed is based on random interferences of English and Creole.

David DeCamp (1971) suggests that the speech varieties in creole communities can not be described through either monosystemic or bisystemic treatment. Any treatment of them should be in terms of rule-governed behavior and rule-governed behavior suggests the existence of implicational relationships on a scaled continuum. With these concepts in mind, he insists on a theoretical paradigm with a competence-performance model including (1) the speaker's incomplete knowledge of his language, (2) the limitations on his memory span, and (3) the speaker's momentary lapses, reformations and conversions. He shows that his competence-performance model can be accounted for by a formal system of rule changes in generative grammar, and that binary features (e.g. (+) or (-) oratorical) would be sufficient to account for the variation and conversions (DeCamp 1971:352).

To relate his theory to his data, DeCamp selects six features which he says are among the many which define the continuum in Jamaican English. He devises a mini-continuum

121 by illustrating the distribution of these features in the speech of his consultants:

*Features*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *A* | child | *+A* | pikni | *-A* |
| *B* | eat | *+B* | nyam | *-B* |
| *C* | th | *+C* | t | *-C* |
| *D* | dh | *+D* | d | *-D* |
| *E* | granny | *+E* | nana | *-E* |
| *F* | didn't | *+F* | no ben | *-F* |

The feature (+A) indicates habitual use of the word *child;* (-A) indicates the use of *pikni* in equivalent context. (+D) indicates a phonological contrast in such pairs as *den/then;* (-D) indicates lack of a phonological contrast, etc. (DeCamp 1971:355)

By sorting the consultants according to their features of speech, DeCamp determined the co-occurrence of features within the pattern of each speaker and plotted the distribution of the six features to form the following hypothetical continuum:

| | VARIABLES | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONSULTANTS | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| 1 | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 2 | - | + | + | + | + | + |
| 3 | - | - | + | + | + | + |
| 4 | - | - | - | + | + | + |
| 5 | - | - | - | - | + | + |
| 6 | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

*Figure 1: Distribution of the features of a linguistic continuum for seven Jamaican speakers. DeCamp's data are presented in scalogram form (Lefebvre 1974:54).*

Disregarding variation, DeCamp found that features scale neatly. If feature A had a positive value, indicating habitual use of the word *child*, then features B, C, D, E, and F also had a positive value. If a speaker had a negative feature A, indicating habitual use of the word *pikni* but a positive B, he will also have positive C, D, E, F, etc. He concludes that if all the *n* variants of a speech community are thus arranged in an ordered series such that the difference between any variety and its neighbor is minimal, the result is a significant continuum, similar to a color spectrum.

One obvious problem with DeCamp's theory is that he considers only binary alternates (+) or (-) features for his consultants' choices. This defect is inherent more in Guttman scaling than in DeCamp's theory. Guttman scaling was originally designed to show inter-informant variation and it is not designed to deal with the kind of intra-individual variation that DeCamp is proposing. It makes no allowances for intra-individual choices which can not be measured in terms of style shift, age, social class or setting. By failing to incorporate intra-individual variation into his theory, he neglects to account for individual variation: the speaker who says *nyam* but who would not normally say *pikni*. There are speakers who say EXACTLY that, but they can not be assigned a clear-cut value of (+A) or (-A) which the Guttman technique calls for. Furthermore, Bickerton (1973:642) argues that binary selections do not allow the true characteristics of the mesolect to surface, which contains not only features from

121 the polar ends, but also features unique to itself. DeCamp's scale shows no representation of a speaker of Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English. It is not known whether such a speaker exists.

Bickerton (1973:642) criticizes DeCamp's procedure. He says DeCamp constructed his scale randomly from different linguistic categories. He mixes phonological, syntactic, and lexical variables, thus making his analysis incommensurate with the study of formal linguistics. Phonological variables, Bickerton says, have a decisive influence on the selection of lexical and syntactic variables as in allegro speech. If DeCamp had confined analysis to linguistically related variables, Bickerton suggests that his description would have had more credibility and it would have been of more significance as a theory of variation and linguistic change.

12 A final point that I would like to make concerning DeCamp's characterization of variation of a continuum is that he says that each speaker masters a span of the continuum, but that no speaker masters variety one and variety ten unless he also masters varieties two through nine. The criterion of mutual intelligibility gives some support to this claim. The fact that English-speaking tourists in Jamaica have difficulty understanding certain varieties of these creoles leads one to suspect that part of the continuum is English and part of it is Creole. What DeCamp did not say and leaves one to conjecture is that the span is semi-permeable depending on the speaker's production and

12 a conflict, and called each conflict a stage in the progression of language change. He anticipated the speaker whose performance differed from that predicted by the competence model. He accounted for intra-individual variation by rule conflict: where at any given point in time a situation exists between speaker *A* who has a rule *X* and speaker *C* who has a rule *Y*, there exists a speaker *B* wherein application of rule *X* alternates with the application of rule *Y* (Bickerton 1973:643).

• 121 Washabaugh questions the bidirectionality of variation proposed by Bickerton and others. He suggests that variation in decreolization may be vertical, contrastive or horizontal depending on three social factors: (1) pressure to avoid the basilect, (2) pressure to acquire the acrolect, and (3) pressure to use a careful speech style for formal situations. The pressure to avoid the basilect is the strongest motive because speakers are not always aware of how they want to talk, but they have a keen perception of how they DO NOT want to talk. Washabaugh does not deny that variation is systemic. Rather, he suggests that it is directed by psychological as well as social and linguistic pressure (Washabaugh 1977:329-51).

The consultants in this study are shown to illustrate the theory and mechanics of these multidimensional variation of English verbs and pronouns. The quantitative measurement of fluctuation between English and Creole

121 variables also reveal correlations between linguistic and social patterns. Some of these patterns of movement are shown in the Creole proverb, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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## CHAPTER 2

## THE CREOLE VERB PHRASE

### 2.0 The Pre-Verbs

● 121 The quantitative measurement of linguistic variables in Gullah will necessarily involve a computation of variants. The counting itself may seem fairly simple. But, as is so fittingly indicated by Labov (1972a:82),

> ...even the simplest type of counting raises a number of subtle and difficult problems. The final decision as to what to count is actually the final solution to the problem at hand.

My procedure is to limit the number of variants to those which can be identified reliably and to set up appropriate categories for each class of variants. For example, one
121 class of variable is the basilectal verb phrase in Gullah
193 which has bare stems and the preverbal markers /də/, /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /dɔŋ/.[1] A quantitative analysis of these forms and their relation to English verbs emerges from the speech of selected consultants whose performances indicate a slant toward:

(1) Isolect A, Creole

(2) Isolect B, a division of usage between Creole and English;

(3) Isolect C, English.

121 The notion of a linguistic continuum aids in the conceptualization of speech varieties ranging from those with features

quite distinct to those with features indistinguishable from Standard English. Fluctuation between overlapping variables forces a direct confrontation with the problems of linguistic variation, and the problem of deciding what quantitative relationships exist between the variants.

The whole issue of variation could be dismissed if one assumes that all variation between English and the creole are examples of code-switching defined as a shift from one linguistic system to another by a speaker who has acquired two or more systems (Wolfram 1969:55). Labov (1971:457) provides an example of a clearly delineated Spanish-English code-shifting in the following:

> Por eso cada, you know it's nothing to be proud of, porque yo no estoy proud of it, as a matter of fact I hate it, pero viene vierne y sabado yo estoy, tu me ve hací a mí, sola with a, aquí solita, a veces que Frankie me deja, you know a stick or something, y yo aquí solita, que es Judy no sabe y yo estoy hací, viendo television, but I rather, y cuando estoy con gente yo me...borracha.

But to regard variation within a language as simply a kind of switching phenomenon is clearly inadequate to describe the language mixture currently in process in creole language communities. First, a bilingual speaker usually has a distinct class of phonological, lexical or grammatical variables associated with a switch. Creole speakers by nature of their language do not have such a neat delineation between English and Creole classes. Furthermore, code-switching seems to suggest that a speaker is bilingual and competent to interact in a multilingual community. This assumption is impractical for creole

12 communities because some members of the communities are most likely not bilingual and the ability to make a sizeable switch to a more socially acceptable form of speech is beyond their competence. Attempts to perform beyond competence may produce forms which are neither English nor Creole. If one assumes that there are two sets of mutually balanced variables involved in the move from Creole to English, then a sound quantitative approach may reveal which system of variants is predominant. Two kinds of variation are involved in the description of contact language situations:

> (1) variation resulting from language mixture, or variants which are importations from another language;
> (2) variation resulting from inherent variability or variant forms which are an integral part of the vernacular
> (Wolfram 1969:44)

The problem with the notion of language mixture, as Wolfram sees it in Black dialect, is that one has to assume that any feature which occurs among the speakers must be described as an integral part of the speakers' system. The infrequency of a form is irrelevant as long as it does eventually occur. For example, the third person singular *-s* morpheme, categorically present with most verbs in English, occurs infrequently in Black dialect. The infrequency of the occurrence is irrelevant in describing the system, as long as it does occur. Thus, this description 'denies the fundamental dynamics of language contact in which a form is borrowed without its systematic integration into a recipient language or dialect'

(Wolfram 1969:45).

•121 A consequence of the concept of inherent variability is that one has to make an obligatory English rule optional in order to describe the speech behavior of some speakers. According to Wolfram, the English copula is obligatory in certain environments (*he's nice*), and in this same environment it is sometimes present and sometimes absent in Black dialect. Wolfram says if this unpredictable occurrence is not delegated to inherent variability its presence has to be interpreted as an importation from standard English. Unusual variants may be automatically disregarded as examples of dialect mixture, with only those forms most unlike standard English being reported. If, however, both kinds of variation are considered in the study of contact languages, then quantitative evidence as well as structural clues would indicate underlying systematic processes involved in a speaker's move from one system to another (Wolfram 1969:45).

Fluctuation between variants is expected as an inherent part of certain isolects. However, because forms fluctuate does not mean that both were a part of the particular isolect historically. The synchronic fluctuation may mean that a speaker is in the process of resolving a rule conflict and will thus produce variants from one system and then another until the conflict is resolved.

Having considered the kind of linguistic variation

121 that is expected in creole communities, I now move to more specific investigations of the kind of variation involved in the analysis of the Creole preverbs and English correlates. The corpus includes consultants selected from a 121 115 total of forty speakers ranging in age from 10 to 96 years. Twenty-one were selected from the forty primarily on the length of their recorded speech samples, and their willingness to participate in the study. The speakers are discussed in the Appendix,[A] and numerals corresponding to each name are [illegible] when reference is made to particular constructions.

193 Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of the preverbal markers /də/, /bɪn/, /bɪnə/, and /dɔŋ/ for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The preverbs are particles that function as members of the verbal auxiliary and may precede any type of main verb. The verbal categories are marked for aspect opposed to time (Cunningham 1970:63). According to Turner (1949:225) the unmarked form of the verb is used to refer to past, present, or future; and no particular form is used to indicate whether or not an action is continuous. Because Gullah employs a predominantly aspectual system, it is sometimes impossible to make one-to-one correlations with English. But, as with most languages, it is possible to make 'closest approximations'. In Table 2.1 the Creole preverbs and their closest approximation are counted and compared. Table 2.1 shows the diversity of the language situation on Wadmallow Island, and that there is considerable

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 31]

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A, [See Category 115, pp. 148-152--Analyst]

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# CHAPTER 3

# THE PRONOMINAL SYSTEM

## 3.0. Creole Pronominal Systems

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The grammatical systems of Atlantic Creoles are complex, but they are not complicated by the elaborate systems of marking found in their European superstrates. Speakers of Indo-European languages must learn to use synthetic processes and devices which are not necessarily required for communicative interaction. Examples of such complications include the presence of obligatorily marked surface categories such as tense, case, gender, number, noun classifiers, voice, mood, and others. None of these is universal, and all may be missing in pidgin and creole languages without effective communication being lost.

It is argued that languages need a certain amount of redundancy for effective communication 'because linguistic exchanges take place almost invariably in conditions which are far from ideal' (Martinet 1960). Several theories have been proposed to explain the function of redundant devices. Included among them is Osgood's, which says that the redundancy quotient of a language will be around 50%, and that:

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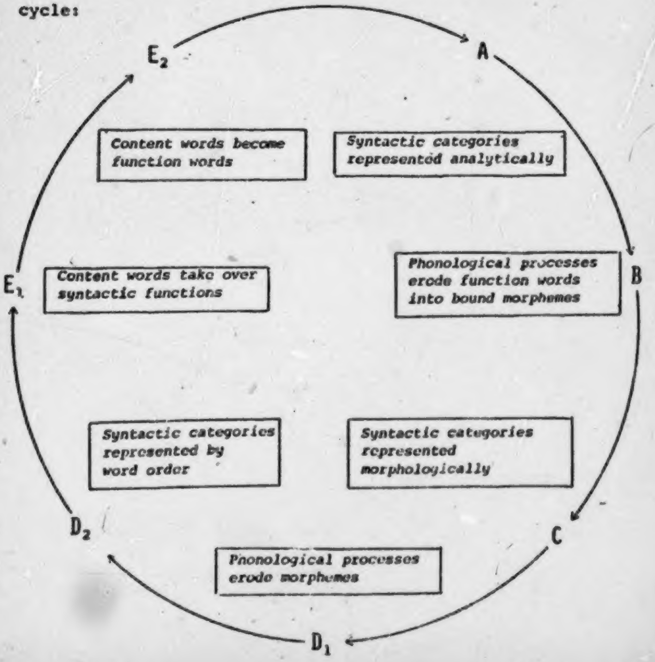
> if a code becomes too tightly efficient, speakers will begin to add in redundant features in order to be understood, but as this process inevitably overshoots it mark, and the code becomes too redundant, speakers will begin to drop out certain features and 'get away with it'—and the cycle begins again (Osgood 1963:305).

Various theories have been proposed to express the need for redundancies in languages: Labov (1971), Givón (1973), and Traugott (1973). Dreyfuss (1975) summarizes the cyclic processes proposed by Traugott, Givón and others to explain the loss and acquisition of morphological elaboration with the following analytic-to-syntactic cycle:


$E_2$
A
Content words become function words
Syntactic categories represented analytically
$E_1$
Content words take over syntactic functions
Phonological processes erode function words into bound morphemes
B
Syntactic categories represented by word order
Syntactic categories represented morphologically
$D_2$
C
Phonological processes erode morphemes
$D_1$

●121 19 The cycle suggests that syntactic and morphological elaboration can serve at least three functions in a language: (1) maintaining an adequate level of redundancy to allow for communication under inadequate conditions (the theory of redundancy formulated by Martinet and others); (2) providing material for stylistic variations (hypothesized by Labov 1971); and (3) expressing the categories of natural syntax (the theory hypothesized by Traugott 1973) (Dreyfuss 1975).

The pronominal system of creole languages has been studied by a number of creolists. Their findings indicate that creoles are not complicated by redundancies and elaborate systems of gender and case marking often found in Indo-European languages. For example, Jamaican Creole has little or no case marking but maintains gender marking for animate and inanimate. Cameroons Creole and Melanesian Pidgin mark neither case nor gender. Sierra Leone Krio
121 193 marks case but not gender. Historically Gullah has been marked for case but not gender (Nichols 1976:86-7). If present-day Gullah maintains a similar pronominal structure, one expects the categories of case and gender to be unspecified, and the nominative, objective, and possessive forms of third person singular pronouns to be essentially the same.

As a first test of this hypothesis, a survey was conducted of the use of third person singular pronouns throughout the Wadmalaw community. Third person singular

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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121 193 pronouns were tested because sex reference is generally marked in English by these forms.

The corpus included twenty speakers selected from the Island, ranging in age from ten to ninety-six years. A quantitative survey was taken of the pronominal distribution for each speaker.[7] Nine were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and on the range of pronouns used. These nine consultants are among the ones who assisted in the verb study as well.

Though the concern of this chapter is third person singular pronouns, Table 3.1 is presented to show the distribution for a range of pronominal possibilities in Gullah.

193 (115) All of the following variants are used by the nine consultants, though all are seldom used by the same consultant:

GULLAH THIRD PERSON SINGULAR CASE PRONOUN VARIANTS

| *Nominative* | *Variants* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | ɪm | i | hi | | 'he' |
| *feminine* | ɪm | i | hi | ʃi | 'she' |
| *neuter* | ɪm | i | ɪt | | 'it' |
| *Objective* | | | | | |
| *masculine* | əm | i | hɪm | | 'him' |
| *feminine* | əm | i | ʃi | həɹ | 'her' |
| *neuter* | əm | i | ɪt | | 'it' |
| *Possessive* | | | | | |
| *masculine* | ɪm | i | ɪz | hɪz | 'his' |
| *feminine* | ɪm | i | ʃi | həɹ | 'her' |

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the distribution and percentage of occurrence of each variant. Nichols' study [128] on pronominal variation in Gullah, undertaken on a neigh-

193 individual consultants.

•121 To devise an implicational scale, I designated numer-
193 ical indices to pronominal forms and their alternates in sequential order away from the basilect. The basilect form is numbered one, its first replacement is numbered two, its second replacement three, etc. The highest number for any form represents the acrolect for that category. The presence of two or more numbers in a single cell represents the existence of a rule conflict. Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently (Table 3.4).

193 Table 3.5 shows a number of pronoun variants used by each consultant. However, the degree of fluctuation between English and Creole reveals that the speakers' grammar is closer to Creole than it is to English. Some variants are clearly a reflection of English intrusions but a quantitative survey of the most frequently used forms show only slight movement from the creole pattern recorded by Turner in 1949.

Many of the cells are split, indicating rule conflicts in performance. The presence of six empty cells in the third person feminine possessive column again suggests that speakers avoid marking this position. When forced to select a feminine possessive pronoun, /i/ is the one chosen 86% of the time. Most often, speakers supply extra linguistic data or mark this slot with the definite article *the*, which is also done in Krio and Jamaican Creole:

Gullah: i kɔt də ɸut, mãn 'She cut her foot, man', or (1)
'He cut his foot, man'

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## NOTES

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1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was ample linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

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2. No consensus has been reached on what features the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

S 121 193 regarded BASILECT as that speech variety which is farthest from standard (#10, the acrolect). MESOLECT has been used to refer to that variety falling approximately midway (#5). All intermediate varieties may be recognized by the prefixes *pre-* or *post-*. These terms, however, should be understood to represent gradations of a speech continuum with one grade merging into the other in a manner similar to a color spectrum. They are not to be regarded as separate entities (see Bailey 1974, DeCamp 1968, Bickerton 1975). Cunningham (1970:67) says the past progressive results from a combination of *been* + *da* → /bɪnə/. It is written /bɪnə/ in this study. The slash marks (/ /) are used to represent broad phonetic rather than strictly phonemic transcription.

S [128]

S 193 3. The *-ing* morphemes appear in the basilect, but generally in relation to /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* as the progressive aspect marker.

A 121 193 4. For opposing arguments see Krapp (1924), McDavid and McDavid (1951). For arguments for a creole origin see Stewart (1967), Dillard (1972), Rickford (1974), and Bickerton (1970).

A 193 5. Black dialect consultants 25, 26 and 27 assure me that the *-s* suffix is used consistently to mark all persons and numbers by some speakers.

S 193 6. For more detailed discussion, see Cunningham 1970.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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## PREFATORY NOTE

Considerable interest in Gullah dialect has developed, not only in South Carolina, but thruout the country, within the past few years. This interest is due largely to the masterly contribution of the late Ambrose Gonzales. It seems appropriate to the University of South Carolina committee on publications, therefore, to publish this study by Dr. Reed Smith, Professor of English in the University, presenting the technical details of the Gullah dialect.

B. L. Parkinson, Director.

University Extension Division.

[p. 2]

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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## FOREWORD

121 197 Gullah, that quaint linguistic mongrel of the black folk of the Carolina-Georgia coast and sea-islands, an English dialect molded by the lips and genius of African slaves, was lifted into the rank of literary languages by Ambrose E. Gonzales by his masterpiece, "The Black Border." Some of the myths and lore of these Negroes had been set down before, but it was left to Gonzales to shape these tales and philosophy into artistic form and contribute them as a positive endowment to our literature. "The Black Border," with its Gullah Vocabulary, has placed this treasure within the easy enjoyment of all readers of English.

128 It was my pleasure and privilege to assist in the preparation of this Vocabulary and in the unification of Gullah words, which, up to that time, existed almost entirely as spoken and unordered vocables. It is now possible for any one, with these Gullah Stories and Vocabulary, to write any English word in a true Gullah form.

121 Dr. Reed Smith has added to these labors the true contribution of the scientist. He has worked out the laws and analogies that unconsciously wrought this quaintly beautiful transformation of English through the mentality and spirit of the slaves in Southern homes. He has placed Gullah upon the plane with our great dialects,—Irish, Scottish, and some of the English idioms.

An examination and reading of Gullah will convince any sincere mind that, in allurement, in sheer beauty of word and phrase, and in a certain winsomeness of its own, it is a permanent enrichment of our language and literature.

STANHOPE SAMS.

Asst. Editor *The State.*

[p. 5]

[p. 6 is blank]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
● 121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo* Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral, and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity, is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dis-
114 pense with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island

CHAPTER FIVE

## *Religious Songs*

533 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro, 175 the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black [533] population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections.

•121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
[538] songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
[128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to ~~the Negro~~ that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
[171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

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[1] *Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-*
[152] *edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his*
*rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or*
[782] *two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some*
*appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.*

[2] *Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence*
[787] *told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish*
*towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.*

[3] *This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.*

## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of 121
a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South 114
Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute
for Research in Social Science of the University of North (122)
Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black
Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive
treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena
Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by
Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents
of the culture of the sea island region.

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of 128
the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk
songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to
describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk
songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena
Island today and then digresses at some length upon the
question of the relation of American Negro music to English
and American folk music. The general reader may
be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is
the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's 128
excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* 114
makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals.
At the same time, his work, with its insistence on
the African origin of the various characteristics of the
Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point
out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for
the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do,
the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal-

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## II

## FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

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THE FIRST collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals.*

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

### FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

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#### *Secular Songs*

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

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[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

533 revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. [178] Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

### SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

#### *The Problem Stated*

•121 533 The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music,*[8] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

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[8] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

### *The Comparison of Musics*[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

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[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music*.

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

- I. Words of Songs
    - A. General subject matter
    - B. Specific lines
    - C. Forms or patterns
- II. Tunes
    - A. Modes and scales
    - B. Modulations
    - C. Intervals
    - D. Endings on other than keynote
    - E. Melodic patterns
- III. Rhythm
    - A. Metre
    - B. Syncopation

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When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

121 177 533 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying the relation of African music to American Negro music would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

### *The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual*

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

> . . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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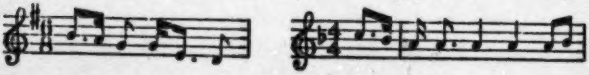

But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of 171
the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the 177
possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this
is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmis- 178
takably traceable to African patterns.

### *Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121• 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of 121
the total number of white religious folk songs is available 177
for study because of their gradual disappearance and dis-
placement by new tunes and by a more conventional type 533
of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion.

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spir- 177
ituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 533

## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of 121 South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly (122) of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury (127) Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent his- 121 tory of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep 113 their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their commoney crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

• 121 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the
113 island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

In the preparation of this manuscript I have become
127 greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those
128 who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

G. G. J.

June, 1930.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.